

*The Sunday School
at Work*

~~377.5~~

~~507~~

~~177~~ *General*

The University of Chicago
Libraries





The Sunday School at Work

By

PHILIP E. HOWARD

AMOS R. WELLS

Rev. A. H. McKINNEY, Ph.D.

W. C. PEARCE

Rev. E. MORRIS FERGUSSON

Rev. FRANKLIN McELFRESH, Ph.D.

Rev. J. S. STOWELL

RALPH E. DIFFENDORFER

Rev. GEORGE GORDON MAHY

Edited by

JOHN T. FARIS, D. D.



PHILADELPHIA

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS

1914

1720 311
70 111
1111 001111

BY 1520

F22

Copyright, 1913,
By F. M. BRASELMANN

CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD.....	7
---------------	---

I

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND HIS ASSOCIATES.....	9
I. The Superintendent Himself.....	11
II. The Superintendent and the Pastor.....	16
III. The Associate Superintendent.....	19
IV. Sizing Up the School.....	22
V. Planning and Carrying Out a Program.....	28
VI. The Superintendent's Council.....	37

II

THE SECRETARY AND HIS ASSISTANTS.....	39
I. Introductory.....	41
II. His Make-Up.....	43
III. His Records.....	49
IV. His Reports.....	57
V. His Relationships.....	62
VI. His Notebook.....	66
VII. His Material and Literature.....	69

III

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN.....	73
I. The Treasurer.....	75
II. The Librarian.....	84

IV

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED.....	95
I. Why?.....	97
II. What?	101
III. How?.....	105
IV. A Graded School.....	109
V. Graded Teachers.....	115
VI. Specialized Work.....	120

CONTENTS

V

PAGE

THE GRADED LESSONS.....	125
I. Introductory.....	127
II. Misconceptions.....	129
III. Difficulties and Objections.....	132
IV. Introducing the Elementary Lessons.....	136
V. Introducing the Secondary Lessons.....	145
VI. Suggestions for Management.....	149

VI

THE ADULT CLASS.....	155
I. How to Organize.....	157
II. An Adult Class Demonstration.....	163
III. The Advantages of Federation.....	180
IV. Organizing an Adult Bible Class Federation.....	183
V. One Town Federation at Work.....	186

VII

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS.....	189
I. A Personal Word.....	191
II. The Plan.....	194
III. The Bible.....	195
IV. The Pupil.....	199
V. The Teacher.....	205
VI. The School.....	208
VII. How to Awaken Interest.....	212
VIII. Training the Teachers of To-Morrow.....	216
IX. Organization and Enrollment.....	220
X. The Class of Teachers.....	224
XI. The City Training School.....	230

VIII

THE HOME DEPARTMENT.....	237
I. What the Home Department Is.....	239
II. How to Begin.....	243
III. The Work of Each Quarter.....	249
IV. Building Up the Membership.....	256

CONTENTS

IX

	PAGE
HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE.....	265
I. The Uncultivated Field.....	267
II. Things Fundamental.....	270
III. The Story of One School.....	273
IV. Some Successful Schools.....	278
V. General Methods Which Have Been Used.....	283
VI. Reaching the Child.....	290
VII. The "Teen" Age.....	294

X

MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.....	301
I. The Point of View.....	303
II. The Missionary Committee in the Sunday School..	305
III. General Methods.....	308
IV. The Exercise of Worship.....	311
V. A Missionary Atmosphere.....	315
VI. Additional Program Possibilities.....	318
VII. Home Reading and Study.....	321
VIII. An Adequate Giving Policy.....	323
IX. Missionary Suggestions by Grades.....	326
X. Helps for the Missionary Committee.....	334

XI

BRINGING THE PUPIL TO A DECISION FOR CHRIST.....	335
I. The Need.....	337
II. Placing the Responsibility.....	344
III. The Decision Day Service.....	350

FOREWORD

SUNDAY-SCHOOL workers are familiar with the series of brief Sunday School Manuals issued during recent years by The Westminster Press. These have been found so helpful that urgent request has been made both for additions to the list and for a book of tested Sunday-school methods, in which the material presented in the manuals should be given more permanent form.

In response to this demand "The Sunday School at Work" has been prepared by Sunday-school workers of national and even international reputation.

Portions of the book are based on the manuals which have proved most useful. Several of these have been almost completely rewritten in the light of later developments in Sunday-school work. However, the chapters of two of the manuals have been incorporated practically without change, as the message carried by these is the message needed to-day. The section by Dr. McKinney on The Secretary and His Assistants, the section by Mr. Fergusson on The Graded Lessons, and the sections by Professor Wells, Mr. Stowell, Dr. Mahy and Mr. Diffendorfer treat of matters not included in any of the manuals.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

I

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND HIS ASSOCIATES

BY

PHILIP E. HOWARD



THE SUPERINTENDENT AND HIS ASSOCIATES

I

THE SUPERINTENDENT HIMSELF

The Superintendent a Manager.—When a man is chosen superintendent of a Sunday school he may be sure of two things: The choice offers him a great privilege and it brings into his life high responsibilities. The work will test his character at points where true character will count with exceptional force in vital service. The superintendent cannot faithfully carry on the work of school management unless he can manage himself and others. He must be willing to take hard knocks, and to take them sweetly. He must be willing, if necessary, to see what he thinks the best part of his pet plans set aside, and to take his medicine without a grimace.

The superintendent must study the fine art of getting others to work. He must be content to be inconspicuous, to keep in the background, to get others to make suggestions, and to teach others that he relies absolutely and finally upon them to carry out work which has been assigned to them. A few experiences of the forgetfulness or faithlessness of others ought not to discourage him for an instant. He is a manager. His chief business is to set others at work; so he must develop every particle of talent he can find among his workers, and distribute

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

responsibility just as much as possible, for the sake of setting everybody at work, including teachers and pupils.

It is hard to bear the criticism that is almost sure to come to a good organizer, for some will say that he is "always trying to get other people to do the work." That is precisely what he ought to be doing, but it is several times as hard as doing the whole thing himself.

Keeping Close to the Workers.—The superintendent must be close to the lives of his coworkers. If he has no particular interest in persons, he ought to get interested. He must acquaint himself with the personal problems of his teachers, their home difficulties, the obstacles in their way when they long to do more work for the school. He cannot do this by a mere "Glad to see you" on Sundays, or even by a warm handshake before or after the service. He must become the adviser of his teachers, meeting them in their homes, sometimes in their places of employment, sometimes in his own home, or, if that is not practicable, then in an occasional social meeting in the school. The superintendent of the third largest Sunday school in the world has a list of his teachers' birthdays, and no matter where he may be he writes each teacher a birthday letter, a personal, hearty, hopeful, earnest, cheery letter.

Always Better Ahead.—The superintendent should cultivate the vision of larger and better things for his Sunday school. Some men habitually look down a dwindling path ending in the dark; other men habitually look up a climbing, winding, ever-rising road toward the heights where there is light and growth. If the superintendent does not expect climbing and an up grade for his school,

THE SUPERINTENDENT

it is almost certain to be on the down grade. It is one thing to say "yes" to this statement, but quite another to keep one's character tuned up in this respect, and rigidly shut out from his vision the down grade. Mr. John Wanamaker, who is the owner of Munkacsy's painting, "Christ Before Pilate," says that one of the saddest sights he can recall was in his own home where Munkacsy was a visitor and was walking up and down before the great picture which he had painted. He stopped and gazed longingly at the canvas, and then said to Mr. Wanamaker, "There is my greatest work; I shall never do another as fine as that." "It seemed to me a great pity," said Mr. Wanamaker, "that the artist should have looked at his achievements in that way; that he should have believed that he had done his best in the past, and that there was nothing better ahead for him." The superintendent who believes, either for his school or for himself, that the best work is in the past, is working on a down grade.

Finding Time for Prayer.—It is particularly important that the superintendent should find time for prayer about his work. No man can do that work as it ought to be done without special guidance from God, without drawing upon the divine reservoirs of patience, hopefulness, courage and steadiness for mind and nerve. A single display of temper in conducting the exercises may ruin a year's work. A tactless, untimely remark or an unkind criticism may permanently destroy a superintendent's influence with teacher or pupil. A weakening in principle will also lower the whole character of the school,—as, for instance, yielding to the pressure of

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

closing a city Sunday school in the summer, or a country school in the winter, or to the raising of money by any other than the straight giving plan. Through prayer the superintendent can find power and poise and purpose as in no other way.

Doing Thorough Bible Study.—One of the temptations that meets the superintendent is the thought that he does not need to do as thorough Bible study as his teachers must. He may go along for weeks and even months with superficial study of the lesson without having the results of his neglect disclosed to his associates, and sometimes not even to himself. The neglect is damaging, however. If he is careless in his Bible study he is not doing his duty by teachers or pupils; his conduct of the program will be superficial, and his words at the close of the lesson hour will ring hollow.

His Bearing During the Session.—During the school hour the superintendent should represent in his own person and manner and words what he would like to have the school become. He should be orderly, steady, patient; acting upon the principle that a smile is usually more powerful than a frown, and setting forth in everything that he does during the session—by the orderly, well-behaved, unhurried, but prompt and brisk conduct of the program—the inner life of hopefulness and high expectation for every member of the school.

Holding to High Ideals.—The superintendent must not be dismayed by his own high ideals. He need not be afraid of setting his mark too high. He need not think

THE SUPERINTENDENT

he must lower the ideal because he has come short of it. If any of his coworkers point to difficulties or failures in the past as good reasons why a certain ideal should not be worked out, that of itself is not the slightest reason for yielding the ideal.

The superintendent himself must be a man whose walk with God is close and confiding, whose prayer-life is absolutely vital to his everyday work, whose interest in his fellow human beings is heartfelt and sincere, whose patience and tact are under constant cultivation, whose hopefulness and courage are not to be disturbed by difficulties, and whose best for himself and for his school is always ahead. And if he is not even trying to be all this to-day, he ought, for the sake of the school and of the service that he is called to render, to pray and to strive for the perfecting of these qualifications in his own life. He may well be hopeful about the result, for he is not alone in his work.

II

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE PASTOR

THE pastor is the official head of the local church. He is more than that. He is the friend, the counselor, the guide in the spiritual affairs of the members of his congregation.

Securing the Pastor's Best.—If the pastor's idea does not readily coincide with the superintendent's idea as to how the school ought to be conducted, there is danger that the superintendent may be somewhat disturbed as to what he thinks is the pastor's lack of understanding of the real conditions. The pastor may be equally concerned as to what he counts a lack of sympathy with his thought on the part of the superintendent. It is a part of the superintendent's duty and privilege to recognize the leadership of the pastor in all matters pertaining to the church in all its branches, and if the pastor is by temperament or training indifferent to the possibilities of the Sunday school, it will be the superintendent's high privilege to bring the pastor into such close relation with the school that he will become the factor that he ought to be in its best life. Meanwhile the superintendent must have in mind that it is also his duty to consult with the pastor about every important move made in the school, to keep the pastor thoroughly posted on school conditions, to bring to the pastor's attention anything of special interest that he discovers in periodicals or in book publications bearing on the Sunday school, and to learn in every

THE SUPERINTENDENT

way he can from the pastor the fine art of spiritual leadership, seeking his advice in the selection of teachers, in special courses of study, in the choice of speakers for special occasions, and in the personal problems that arise among the workers or pupils, and thus in every way to secure for the school the best that the pastor can give.

Special Work for the Pastor.—The pastor may be the very best one to lead a teachers' meeting for lesson study, or the teacher-training class where prospective teachers can be trained for their work in the school. Again, it may be that he is precisely the right leader for the adult Bible class. His presence in the school should be encouraged in every way by the superintendent. He should call upon him for some part in the service. He should ask him to act as a substitute teacher occasionally, if the pastor has no regular class. He may well call upon him to lead a monthly school prayer meeting, when at the close of the lesson hour the service is turned over to the pastor, and the whole school gives its attention to a prayer service in which many take part. Great service can be rendered to the pastor and to the school if the superintendent will make it his business to report to the pastor any signs of spiritual interest on the part of any pupil. In one school where this is done the pastor makes it a practice to see, just before each communion Sunday, every pupil who is not a member of the church. In that school the pastor is constantly in touch with the progress that the pupils are making in the spiritual life.

Counting the Pastor In.—The pastor ought to be "counted in." The great trouble is that so many of us

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

leave him out of our calculations in planning for the school's welfare.

But the superintendent must not expect the pastor to give his whole time to the Sunday school. He has other duties that claim his time and thought. He can help, and he will help, if the superintendent will open ways by which the help can be rendered, and will count the pastor in.

III

THE ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT

A Real Partnership.—It is better for the superintendent to regard his coworker in the executive work of the school as an associate rather than as an assistant. It is not assistance from one not having much responsibility at this point that the superintendent needs so much as whole-hearted, busy-brained partnership with a fellow executive. Organization requires a definite head in leadership, but that leader is a better leader because of tested ability to draw another, or more than one, into the practice of a devoted, joint responsibility for the superintending of the school.

There is hardly any phase of the superintendent's work that offers such an opportunity for service through co-operation as his relations with his associate superintendent. Assuming that there is one such associate, these are some of the ways in which the partnership can be made effective:

On the Platform.—Arrange so that the associate will be in charge of the platform work for a certain number of Sundays, while you are busy on what might be called the floor work, such as assignment of substitute teachers, the receiving of new pupils, etc. Let the associate prepare the program for the day, and let him conduct it without any hovering interference on your part. It is better to have some things go not quite as you would prefer than to have your associate feel that he is, after all, only a

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

temporary assistant. You will be glad to note a refreshing variety in the school sessions under this method, and it will bring you meanwhile into closer contact with the details of the school life and work as you move about your floor duties at proper times. When you, as superintendent, in your turn have charge of the platform work, your associate takes the floor work, and is able to study the school needs closely and to meet them much better than he could otherwise do.

Dividing Up the Work.—Divide certain definite responsibilities between the associate and yourself in the care of the whole enterprise, shifting these from one to the other from time to time in order that both yourself and your associate may be thoroughly familiar with every part of the school. Do not specialize too closely by confining your duties or his always to one group of activities. The school needs to be equipped with well-trained, fully informed leadership, and at least two persons should be thoroughly posted and ready to lead in any part of the work.

A Many-Sided Training.—For instance, suppose for a few months or longer, the associate should take the initiative in securing and placing new teachers, in consultation with his chief. Or, again, let him supervise the work of looking up absentees, and receive the secretary's reports, and in general have an eye to the pupils' and teachers' presence and promptness. He may also be the chairman, now and then, of a Program Committee for special occasions. In short, let him be trained to do all that a superintendent should be able to do, even to the presiding at

THE SUPERINTENDENT

some of the business or other meetings of the workers. And this very leading out of a fellow worker into equal and ever-enlarging service can be made one of the joys of a superintendent's service for his school,—“in honor preferring one another.” It would be unwise, of course, to keep the school in a state of uncertainty as to the right officer to whom various matters should be referred; but the obvious position of each, and the duties of each as duly assigned and announced from time to time, will clear up this possibility of confusion. And the close partnership plan will help both superintendent and associate to act wisely in the light of what each knows the other would counsel. In one school where a very strong business man of powerful personality is the chief superintendent there are several associates; and if a stranger asks the leader to tell him who is the superintendent, he will answer, “Well, we have several, and we divide up the work.” And that is not a bad answer for any superintendent to be able to give.

IV

SIZING UP THE SCHOOL

TAKING an inventory is one of the first things, and one of the frequent things, a superintendent should do. And here are some of the items he would do well to take into account, both to ascertain what the school is, and what it may come to be.

1. Is every class supplied with a teacher?

Of course a class without a teacher is not a class. A study of the record of attendance and a look over the school will bring to light the exact conditions,—if the records have been well kept. A careful note should be made of the class without any teacher at all, and of classes having irregular teachers. The teacher is the key to all good work in the school. If the key isn't there when wanted, there is trouble. If the key is missing altogether, a new one must be found.

For the class without a teacher, the superintendent should act promptly. It may be best to combine the class with another; but very rarely should a class of girls or boys in their teens or under, number more than eight. Unless the school has a training class for teachers, from which some one is about to be graduated, the new teacher may be looked for among adult Bible class members, or among some of the young people who have shown a good attendance record, and an interest in the school in other ways. Should the search fail here, it would be well to look over the list of adult church members, considering

THE SUPERINTENDENT

with the pastor the names of any who have given any signs of personal fitness for the teacher's work, and with the help of the pastor and some of the teachers secure some one from this number. If the proper teacher cannot be secured from the present church membership it may be that there is in the neighborhood some one who has been in Sunday-school work, and yet who has not been drawn into any association with the work or the school.

2. Are the school records in good shape?

Look at them. Apply tests. Are the pupils' full names correctly entered? If not, painful blunders may result. When you write a warm-hearted birthday letter to John F. Wilkins and address him as "My dear James" and mail the letter to James E. Wilkins, the aggrieved and scornful John will wonder whether your letter is as warm as it reads. If you have any doubt about the list, ask the teachers to examine their attendance cards or roll books, and to make sure of the literal accuracy of each name.

Are the names all there for every department? Sometimes teachers depend upon the secretary, and the secretary upon the teachers, for completion of names and addresses. The responsibility becomes divided, and the records fall. It is well to put the final responsibility upon the secretary for the correctness of records, and to let him know that you rely upon him for thorough work.

Do the records show all that you want to know, or ought to know, about teachers and pupils? Note on a slip of paper what items of information you should have to enable you to keep track of the membership. You will need to know at least these facts: Full name—not merely the surname and initials; address; age and birthday of

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

pupil; parents' names, occupation and church relation; whether pupil is a member of the church or not; date of uniting with the church; attendance record for each Sunday—on time or late. To this may be added a record of church attendance; of contributions; of proficiency in recitation of assigned work, or of the general lesson; and a note showing when the pupil brings another to the school. The Presbyterian Board of Publication can furnish you with information about a variety of record systems, and will aid you in choosing the one best adapted to your school.

3. Is the percentage of attendance as compared with enrollment what it should be?

Look over the records for typical Sundays at various seasons of the year for a few years past, or even one year, and test the question. If you have an enrollment of two hundred and the attendance has averaged only one hundred on clear, pleasant Sundays, something is wrong. Fifty per cent attendance is too small.

The trouble may be found in any one or in all of several directions:

(a) The roll may need cutting down. Many persons on the roll may not now be entitled to membership in the school, because of removal from the neighborhood or regular attendance at some other school.

(b) The percentage may be low because the occasional absentees are allowed to become chronic cases, through lack of any follow-up plan, either by letters or by personal visits from teachers or officers, or from pupils appointed for the occasion.

(c) The percentage may be low because the general platform exercises of the school have fallen into dull and

THE SUPERINTENDENT

uninteresting ways. In one large school in Trenton, New Jersey, the superintendent has tested this phase of the question so carefully that he is sure to notice a falling off in attendance whenever he ceases to exert himself in preparing an interesting program.

(d) The percentage may be low because of an unfortunate placing of pupils in classes unsuited to their needs. The difficulty is subtle and cannot be cured in a moment, or even detected, without cautious and tactful study.

A school that averages in attendance only fifty per cent of its enrollment on Sundays that are not stormy should be closely scanned for such common defects as are here noted. If you find that the percentage is about eighty, or better, it means that good work is going on, and naturally suggests an extending of the enrollment by getting in new members to benefit by the school life and work.

4. Does the school sing heartily?

Not noisily. Not necessarily with fine effects in skilled chorus work. But does the school like to sing? Does it clearly show its enjoyment of the singing? Or is it a drag and a tug to rouse the school whenever a hymn is given out? If this most joyous and heartening part of the Sunday-school service is a bore to the school, something is woefully wrong. The leader may be a scold or a driver, snapping his lash over a sullen team, made sullen by his nagging. Reform him or replace him. The hymns may be unattractive to the boys and girls, who can so readily give that strong heartiness to a school's singing when they are asked to sing hymns they like. At least one of the more prominent hymn-book publishers never includes a hymn in any of his books until it has been tested by him

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

in Sunday schools and has met with the evident approval of those who are asked to sing it. We should not be too much afraid to let a school sing hymns that the school likes, whether we, with our grown-up likes and dislikes, would prefer them or not. It is simply hopeless to get a school to sing heartily any hymns that are not heartily liked by the school. Your present hymn book may have many hymns in it that the school would like if it had a chance to try them. Or, again, it may be time for a new book.

5. Has the school a workers' meeting?

By that is meant a meeting for lesson study, and for careful study of the school's needs. Such a meeting should be held once a week, on an evening set apart for it, or before or after the midweek prayer meeting. It will cost much sacrifice to arrange it. That meeting is worth all it costs—and more. Of course, it can't be done—if you look at the thing through the eyes of the "Can't-Do-Its." But it can be done, and should be, if you expect to be superintendent of a real school, where definite, united, thorough work is done.

6. How many pupils have united with the church in the past year?

Check up the roll carefully, prayerfully. Note the classes where no such step has been taken by a single member who was outside the church one year ago. Do you know whether or not the teacher of that class ever puts the great invitation directly to the members of that class, individually? How have the general exercises helped in this direction? Has the school observed Decision Day? Have school prayer meetings been held frequently? You are at the heart of the school life just here. Your dis-

THE SUPERINTENDENT

coveries, decisions and your doings as superintendent at this point, determine eternal issues.

7. Is the school divided into the proper departments, so that all this work can be done at its best?

Consider this. Do not be hampered by what you may call a lack of equipment. One of the finest Sunday schools in this country is scattered all through every nook and corner of the church building. Some of the greatest helps to good work are the inconveniences that you have. Any school, big or little, may be, should be, divided into departments according to the age of the pupils. What the departments may be is told elsewhere in this manual. In your inventory of the school the study of department arrangement must never be lost sight of.

8. Does the school give systematically and understandingly?

If the pupils are taught in the class and from the platform to give regularly, and are told how much is needed for any object, and the actual use to which the money is put, they will give more, and give more gladly, and learn more clearly the blessing of giving, than if they are merely told that "it is now time to make our usual offering." Does your school really know the where and the why of its gifts? Do you know, so that you could enlighten a boy or girl on the subject by information other than the mere name of a "board" or institution? Knowledge,—and consequently intelligent interest,—is at the heart of giving.

Note closely, too, how the school expenses are met. Do the church authorities look out for these, or must the school do it? The school is the church at Bible study. The church as a whole should bear the expenses.

V

PLANNING AND CARRYING OUT A PROGRAM

EVERY session of the school should be conducted according to a definite program. And the program calls for planning before it is used, and watchfulness, energy and enthusiasm in carrying it out when in use.

Variety and Fitness.—Two factors should always be kept in mind in all this—variety and fitness. One leading Sunday-school superintendent has said that the only regular feature of his program is variety. And variety is not even hard to get, if one remembers the need of fitness, appropriateness in the program, in accordance with the chief thought and purpose of the lesson. So varied is the Bible material that if the superintendent plans his program each Sunday to fit the lesson, his programs are bound to be varied, and he will not be likely to produce a dull or tiresome routine for the school session.

The Elements of a Program.—In schools where money is not readily available for printed orders of service the superintendent need not be at a loss for a perfectly satisfactory plan for his program. Let him look over the lessons for the coming three months to discover what definite impression should be made upon the school by those lessons. He has several means at his disposal for helping the teachers to impress the lessons of that quarter. His choice of hymns, his choice of Scripture readings, in

THE SUPERINTENDENT

addition to the lesson text, and the brief platform prayers, talks and blackboard work are the chief means that he will use.

Choosing the Hymns.—The hymns should vary in sentiment and musical character with the lessons. Some of the strong, militant hymns like "Onward, Christian Soldiers," or "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus," will be chosen for lessons in which the march of God's kingdom and the loyalty of his followers are prominently taught. But hymns of that temper and tone are not wisely chosen for a lesson on the quieter virtues of patience or forbearance. It is easy, with the school hymn book in hand, to guard in advance against the choice of a hymn that cannot possibly add anything to the day's definite impression of the real lesson.

Bible Readings Readily Found.—In lesson periodicals there are suggested Bible readings bearing on the lesson for each Sunday. The superintendent will find in these selections ample material for supplemental Scripture readings to use in the school session.

Preparation for Prayer.—The preparation for prayer is ordinarily slight, and often lacking entirely. But prayer needs preparation, for the leader is not merely to utter stock phrases which have a devout sound, but he is to lead in prayer—to represent in God's presence the inmost heart-longings of a praying company of children, young people and grown folks. He is to talk with God in their behalf, in their stead. Can a man enter into a responsibility like that without preparation of the most

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

earnest sort? And here again the lesson itself will guide one's thought. As the great life-thoughts of the lesson are revealed by study, the superintendent will see how these thoughts apply to the neighborhood life around him. Is the lesson "Jesus, the Good Shepherd"? That lesson will suggest to the superintendent, not prayer for deliverance from wars and pestilence, but the uplifting of voice and heart to God in thankfulness for the shepherding care of the Saviour, and in earnest appeal for the saving of those who are of the flock and yet not within the fold to-day. In the light of that lesson, prayer may be offered for the distressed, the wandering, the forsaken; for those who are choosing to remain unshepherded by the Good Shepherd. So the superintendent will speak to God for his fellow-workers and fellow-students, and his words will follow their heart-thoughts for the day.

The Superintendent's Lesson Talk.—One of the temptations that is almost sure to beset a superintendent is the desire to talk from the platform after the lesson. Some call this address a review of the lesson, and it is—sometimes. Usually, however, the danger is that the superintendent will merely try to impress a lesson truth that has appealed to him, while not really knowing what has been taught in the classes. A lesson review is out of the question unless the reviewer knows in the main what has been presented to the pupils as a first view. The superintendent's talk on the lesson is rarely a review of it, since he rarely knows just what the teachers have taught, because of no agreement or unison among the workers beforehand as to the truths that are to be taught on that day. Such unison in teaching can be gained in the regular teachers'

THE SUPERINTENDENT

or workers' meeting, but hardly otherwise. And if the talk is not a real review, in this sense, it is likely to be diffuse, confusing, a bore to the school, with no good effect whatever. Brevity comes by careful planning, not by mere wishing; a clinching of the day's impressions implies at least a knowledge of what the impressions have been, judged by what the teaching has designed to do. And a single, clear-cut idea, pressed home, is infinitely more effective than many ideas made into a speech.

A superintendent will realize that sometimes silence on his part is the best speech he can make, and no speech at all is far better than one that only sends the school's thought a-glimmering after an unimportant and perhaps untaught part of the lesson. The working, and not the talking, superintendent is needed in the average school.

At the Blackboard.—Blackboard work is open to any superintendent who can make a mark with chalk, and see the gist of the lesson. Ability to draw well can easily be a hindrance to blackboard work. The skilled maker of sketches is liable to draw too much—to give the eye more than it can catch quickly. The blackboard is a powerful, searching speaker, if allowed to speak simply. A word or two, a few lines, an erasure, an insertion, a simple design worked out before the school, can be made to deliver a direct and memorable lesson.

But do not make the mistake of putting your blackboard work on the board to appear there in full view of the school during the whole session. Nothing kills the effectiveness of blackboard work so quickly as its display before the instant of its use. One of its chief advantages is the sudden, surprising, unexpected appeal to the eye,

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

brought into view as the truth is developed in the speaker's words. If the school sees the blackboard design before you begin to talk, your talk will have scant attention. Everyone in the room has reached your conclusions when you are only beginning to develop the idea. And that is fatal to interest and attention.

Variety and Fitness in Method.—And how may a wise variety and fitness be gained in the methods of using hymns, Scripture readings, prayer, words from the platform and blackboard work? It is readily seen that if fit choices of material are made there will be variety. But the order of events, the method of handling material, also need variety and fitness.

If a superintendent will plan at one time programs for several Sundays he will be more likely to avoid sameness in method than if he plans only from Sunday to Sunday. He can compare the programs more carefully, can add here and cut out there, and rearrange and reshape, to give freshness to his plan. For instance, on the first Sunday he might have the school open with a hymn, followed by prayer; on the next, with silent prayer, followed by a hymn; on the next by having the school repeat in unison a psalm appropriate to the day's lesson, followed by a hymn and prayer. And so from week to week he can, in wonderfully wide variety, plan the way in which the session is to be opened.

Variety in Scripture Reading.—Again, there is no lack of variety in ways of Scripture reading. It is not necessary that the school should always read the lesson by the ordinary method of alternating between platform and

THE SUPERINTENDENT

school. Let the superintendent read one verse, the teachers the next, the girls the next, the boys the next, and all together the next, and so on through the lesson. Or let the pastor conduct the reading, reading part way through a verse, while the whole school takes up the reading where he ceases, and finishes the verse in concert. This method quickens attention amazingly. Or, again, write upon slips of paper the number of each verse in the lesson, hand these to classes just before the opening of the school, and ask each class to respond by reading from the Bibles in concert that verse, when you call for it. Once more, when you wish the lesson as a whole to be clearly brought before the school, select a good reader from among the pupils, and have that one come to the platform, while you and the rest of the school listen attentively to the reading of the lesson.

Supplemental Bible reading can be made particularly interesting by calling upon teachers and pupils for special parts of it. In your week's reading of passages bearing on the lesson you will find material for this. Select such verses or whole passages as you wish to use; indicate on a slip of paper their location; and hand these slips to a few teachers and pupils before the school session. Then, just preceding the reading of the lesson, briefly explain that in order to help all to understand better the lesson itself, some members of the school will read a few portions of Scripture giving light on the lesson and its teachings. By a series of questions which you have prepared to draw out as answers the assigned verses, call for the verses or passages, one by one. If these are read in a clear and distinct way, the exercise holds the attention of the school effectively.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Variety in the Superintendent's Talk.—The superintendent's word on the lesson need not come always at the close of the session, but may sometimes precede the study period. Then he may speak briefly of a single point which he hopes no one will overlook, but with care not to take the edge off the teachers' work by expatiating on the lesson; or he may state that after the lesson period he will call upon the school to answer a question about the lesson, which he now gives out. Either of these methods may be used to focus the teaching on one phase or another of the theme for the day, or to emphasize a point that should have special note. Sometimes object talks should be used. Often no talk at all is needed. It is better to have pupils and teachers wish that the superintendent had spoken on the lesson than to have them sorry that he did.

Nor should the blackboard be used, necessarily, every Sunday; and when used, as it should be very often, it need not be brought into the teaching at invariably the same point in the service. Sometimes a design may be used to illustrate truth, sometimes a word or two as a means of fastening the lesson truth in the school's thought.

Numerous other items readily suggest themselves, such as solos, recitation of Scripture passages, or appropriate lesson poems read or recited by individual pupils; prayer by teachers or pupils; a missionary address with objects from mission fields; special programs worked out from start to finish with one theme in mind, such as faith, prayer, hope, courage, and programs for special days.

All this and more can be done without one cent of expense for printed matter. But each program should

THE SUPERINTENDENT

be written out for the superintendent's use, filed for reference and used as a help later in securing variety. If money is available for printed orders of exercise, they will be useful if not used for too long a time. They can be printed on two sides of durable cards about eight by ten inches in size, and can be prepared by a committee, if desired, with the superintendent as chairman. The printed order of service gives a definiteness to the program that helps toward order and steadiness in the school, and advance preparation by the superintendent.

Review Sunday.—Among all the plans for Review Sunday, the written review is here earnestly commended as having very many advantages. It is not likely to be popular at first. It is easier for teacher and pupils to go on from Sunday to Sunday without tests so accurate as the actual writing down of answers to questions; but when once started, the written review is a great factor in school life.

At the beginning of the quarter let it be understood from the platform that at the end of the quarter, on Review Sunday, the superintendent will put a few questions, possibly one on each lesson, which he will ask the school to answer in writing. The review may include all in the school who can write. Occasionally during the quarter ask, in a brief, two-minute review, a few questions on the preceding lessons, in order to keep the school alive to the coming quarterly review.

On Review Sunday see to it that each pupil and teacher is supplied with an ample sheet of paper and a well-sharpened pencil. It will pay you to buy, by the gross or dozen, enough pencils, at a cent or less apiece, to use

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

again and again in the reviews. The boys will enjoy sharpening them for you.

Prepare very carefully ten questions on the quarter's lessons—questions not hard at all at first—and let the first two or three of the ten be so easy that they will seem almost too easy to the school. Dictate the questions from the desk, and ask the pupils and teachers not to write the questions, but the answers, properly numbered, and to put at the head of the sheet the writer's name and class name or number.

Dictate very slowly, repeating the questions several times, and assuring the school that you will allow plenty of time for the answers. It is important that no one should be hurried, especially in the first test.

Let the teacher gather the papers and pencils at the close of the review period, sending them to the platform by class members. The pencils may be kept by the secretary for future school use. The papers may be turned over to a committee of three teachers for examination and marking, or may be read and marked by the superintendent. It will give you a new and intimate view of what teaching has been done in the school.

In reporting on the papers, those who have answered every question correctly may constitute an honor list, and the names of all who have attained an average of, say, seventy-five or over may be read. Some will prefer to read class averages, though there is a danger that this may not always be quite fair to the class in which ability varies widely.

The written review sets up higher standards in any school for teacher and pupil, and is sure to quicken both teaching and study where it is thoroughly tested.

VI

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S COUNCIL

THE Superintendent's Council is a feature of the well-organized school which means more to each department than many words could tell. The Council is made up of the officers of the school and the committee chairmen, where special work or departments of work are under the care of the committees.

The superintendent needs the Council. He can accomplish more for the school with it than without it. He can get more done in less time and with less doubt as to the acceptability of his plans than in any other way.

The Council could well meet once a month for an evening's work. The questions to be decided by it should be clearly outlined before the meeting, so far as possible, and sent in writing to each member. This gives definiteness to the meeting, and affords to the members of the Council an opportunity to think over the questions in advance.

Special meetings may readily be called by the superintendent to deal with emergencies. He will find wisdom in such a group, and he will do well to add that wisdom to his own.

All important plans for school improvement should be considered by the Council before action is taken by the teachers, and should have the Council's approval before going into effect. In this way many ill-advised plans can be set aside, and many good plans started at their best.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The Superintendent's Council is a clearing house for all the most important school matters, and the superintendent will do well to avail himself of such a means of wise management.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

II

THE SECRETARY AND HIS ASSISTANTS

BY

REV. A. H. MCKINNEY, PH.D.

THE SECRETARY AND HIS ASSISTANTS

I

INTRODUCTORY

IN any work for God what the worker is counts for far more than what he does. Character and consecration are more valuable assets than cleverness and brilliancy. The "good and faithful servant" received the Master's commendation and reward. At the same time there are diversities of gifts and differences of operation. Not every good man is fitted to be the ideal secretary of a Sunday school. There are many misfits in this office as there are elsewhere. Better be an efficient something else than a secretary that interferes with the best possible progress of the Sunday school.

Many secretaries have begun work in Sunday schools without training. They have had no one to direct them. The literature pertaining to their work is meager. Hence they go along as best they can, but that "best" is not what it might be.

These chapters are prepared to help secretaries to know themselves and their work, and to suggest some principles from which may be formulated rules and methods of procedure. These principles are as applicable to the small school in the country as to the larger school in the village or to the very large school in the city.

A successful merchant who had just investigated a

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Sunday school, with mind alert, eyes open and tongue ready to ask searching questions, said to the superintendent, "Tell me in a sentence the secret of the success of this school." Instantly the reply came: "Attention to details." He knew how much the efficient secretary of that school had to do with its success because of his untiring attention to details.

Nothing should be considered too insignificant to engage the secretary's attention, and nothing too large to be attempted by him, for the small things as well as the great things count when a verdict is to be rendered as to the success or the failure of a Sunday school.

II

HIS MAKE-UP

THERE are several characteristics which determine the success or the failure of a Sunday-school secretary. While these traits may not all be found in a marked degree in one person, the absence of any of them militates against the best service.

Conscientious.—Above everything else, the secretary should be conscientious, because his work consists in a large measure in keeping records which are valuable in the ratio that they approximate perfection. Statistics should be based on facts and not on guesses. No average attendance can be about three hundred. An average is obtained by an arithmetical calculation. Hence the secretary must be absolutely correct in his figures if they are to have any value. A haphazard method of “supposing” should have no place in a Sunday school where character is to be developed.

Intelligent.—The old theory, that a young fellow who was not fitted for any other position in the Sunday school could be made secretary, has been outgrown in these later years of Sunday-school development. So much depends upon the secretary’s intelligent appreciation of the value of the details of his work that too much emphasis cannot be placed on this trait of his make-up. As he is

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

to be more than a figurehead or mere scribe, the greater his intelligence the more he will be able to help in the progress of the work of the school. One of the best Sunday-school secretaries known to the writer was a business man with many and varied interests who brought the same grade of intelligence into his Sunday-school office as into his week-day occupations. Why should not God's work have the best?

Systematic.—A person may be conscientious to a degree and yet so lacking in system that he is not to be trusted as a keeper of records of any importance. No matter how small a Sunday school may be, unless its secretary is systematic his work will soon get into such a condition that it is valueless. Much more is this the fact in large schools. Many things must be done every Sunday, at a given time, and as a matter of routine; otherwise confusion results. If the bank clerk must be systematic, why not the secretary of a Sunday school?

Trained.—It is often most difficult to get training in secretarial work. In large schools it is possible to take young men or young women and put them to work as substitutes or assistant secretaries with the twofold object of benefiting the school by their services while they are being trained for more important work. A business training is of the greatest value to one who would act as secretary. If the same industry and common sense are put into work for the Sunday school as are demanded in business life the work of the school is helped mightily.

The secretary who is eager for training will learn these facts: 1. Much valuable information may be gained by

THE SECRETARY

visiting other Sunday schools and conversing with successful secretaries. 2. The secretaries' club ought to be a means of education for the secretary. 3. Conferences of Sunday-school secretaries are held in connection with institutes and conventions. 4. Sunday-school periodicals should be studied; they contain helpful suggestions for secretaries

Here, as in other fields of effort, where there is a will there is a way. He who will get instruction and training will find opportunities of learning how to become more proficient in his secretarial work.

Consecrated.—To believe in one's work and to act as if it were worth the best that is in one will insure success. The secretary who appreciates the part he is playing in the progress of the kingdom and who magnifies his office will not be deficient in the necessary qualities referred to. He will not only study his work, but himself also. He will seek to realize wherein he is deficient and will set himself to remedy his deficiencies. He will embrace all opportunities for improvement and by degrees will become what he thinks he ought to be. His consecration will lead him toward the highest and best in his work and will keep him from being easily offended or discouraged.

Coöperative.—There are some excellent secretaries, so far as their clerical work is concerned, who are worse than useless because of their unwillingness to coöperate in the work of the school. They look upon their office and its equipment as their own private property, and resent any intimation that others have anything to do with their

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

time or manner of working. Such foolish workers interfere with the discipline of the school by being a law unto themselves as to when and how their work shall be done. They interfere with the work of teachers and officers by insisting on having their own way. At first their fellow workers dread them and then avoid them, and they themselves come to the conclusion that it is very difficult to do secretarial work. The coöperative secretary has learned that there are times and ways of doing his much-needed work so as not to disturb, distract or impede others. How much this coöperation means is evident by comparing a school blessed by a coöperative secretary with a school cursed by one who runs things to suit himself.

Courteous.—There are many things connected with a secretary's position that have a tendency to vex and annoy; there is much that might be made occasion for fault-finding. The courteous secretary puts his pride into his pocket, and for his Master's sake becomes the servant of all in the school. He studies to be quiet, attentive, polite, responsive. He realizes that for Sunday-school machinery—as for all other machines—oil is much more effective than sand. Pupils, teachers and officers like to come to his room or desk, for they know that they will be pleasantly received and patiently listened to. The author thinks of two secretaries: The first was conscientious in the extreme. His attention to details was remarkable. But he was lacking in intelligence. He had no vision of better things ahead. He could not discriminate between the important and the unimportant. He spent so much time on relatively trivial matters that he rarely caught up with the pressing demands of the day.

THE SECRETARY

He tried to please everyone, but he spent so much time in explaining why he did valueless work that he became a bore. When he removed to another state his Sunday-school friends were not grieved at his departure. In looking for his successor the workers said to one another, "Let us find some one with sense enough to appreciate that some things may be left undone and that some words are best unspoken." His successor was a well-trained young business man. He knew his work from A to Z. His records were models of correctness and neatness. His reports were most illuminating. When he resigned, however, because of an imagined insult there was rejoicing throughout the Sunday school. Despite his intelligence and system he was lacking in that kind of devotion that would have enabled him to coöperate with others.

If the consecration of the one secretary had been united with the intelligence of the other, the result would have been an ideal worker. But is not this combination too ideal to be found in one person? This question suggests another. How important is the work of the secretary of the Sunday school? Much depends on the answer. If the work is of little importance not much need be required of the worker.

Preparing for the Best Service.—The secretary of the Sunday school or the candidate for that position who concludes after due investigation that the work of the secretary is worthy the best that one is or has, will aim for proficiency. Like the professional man or the business man who is not satisfied with present attainments, he will take pains to prepare himself for the very best service. Many will be benefited because of his endeavors

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

after the best, but the one reaping the largest harvest will be himself.

The secretary's work calls for a person who bulks big in many directions. Where this is recognized, the proper type of man or woman is selected for the office. Where the ideal has been held up high, incumbents have fitted themselves for their positions. Why not?

The writer has a number of friends ranging from thirty to fifty years of age who have good positions, yielding large salaries, who are studying to fit themselves to do their work better. Why? Because they realize that it is worth while to do the very best work. A successful physician with a large, remunerative practice every now and then takes a few weeks' postgraduate work or instruction. Why? Not because he is not rendering good service, but because he knows that it is worth while to prepare himself for better work.

III

HIS RECORDS

A FAITHFUL, progressive superintendent may have his work greatly interfered with by an inefficient secretary, or one who does not coöperate with him. The efforts of earnest teachers may be hindered by a secretary who does not understand his business or by one who fails to realize that he may be a helper to everyone in the school through the records which he makes and preserves.

Just the kind of records that a Sunday-school secretary should keep depends on many things. In some form or another he should have a complete registry of the members of all the departments, with their residences and church affiliations. Other data—such as age, birthday, members of the family of each pupil and worker—may be recorded as local conditions require. A record should be kept of every member's attendance, deportment, credits received for work done and demerits, if it be the custom of the school to mark for disorder, lack of attention, etc.

The secretary's records should be:

Simple.—A complex, complicated or intricate system of records may bear witness to the ingenuity of the secretary, but will not prove helpful in the conduct of the school. The fewest possible words or figures adequate to record the facts should be aimed at.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Comprehensive.—While simplicity is desirable, comprehensiveness should not be overlooked. The records should include all necessary facts and at times suggestions made for future reference.

Systematically Arranged.—There are many methods of keeping Sunday-school records. The secretary must decide on the methods best suited to the size of his school and the work it is doing. Whatever kinds of records are adopted they should be well arranged. System aims at doing the largest possible amount of work with the expenditure of the least time and effort

Accessible.—Sunday-school records are not the personal property of the secretary. They belong to the school. It should be understood that certain specific individuals have the right to consult them. Therefore they should be kept where they are accessible. If it is advisable to put them under lock and key, the key should be at hand at all times, or duplicates of it made, so that the authorized persons will have no difficulty in getting at the records when they are needed.

Written Up.—Most annoying is it for the pastor or superintendent or any other authorized person consulting the secretary's records to discover that the desired facts have not been recorded at the proper time. It is not enough that old records should be written up. Records of two or of ten years ago are valuable, but sometimes it is necessary to know also facts of recent date; to be known they must be recorded in legible shape.

THE SECRETARY

Preserved.—Years after the Sunday-school secretary's records are made they may be needed in order to settle disputed points, or to furnish information on matters that have grown indistinct in the memory of those concerned. Comparisons have to be made frequently. Hence, the Sunday-school secretary should see to it that his records are preserved in some lasting form. Circumstances must determine the method of keeping the records in good condition. From time to time the present secretary of the school should make it his business to ascertain whether the records that have been handed down from the past are being kept for future use.

As has been suggested in the foregoing, the particular form of record must be determined by the person who keeps it. For many purposes card indexes are most available, as they furnish a form of record which is readily accessible for present use and which may be systematically filed for the future. Loose leaves are now much used by Sunday-school secretaries because they economize time, labor and money.

A scrapbook, containing programs of services used on special occasions and also copies of the various blanks and forms employed in the routine work of the school, increases in value as the years roll on. Much time is saved by individuals and committees when such a book has been intelligently filled and is kept available for ready reference.

A file cabinet or closet of some kind is an essential adjunct to every secretary's room. This piece of furniture should be in a dry place and kept clean, for moth and rust work havoc with valuable records.

The following is suggestive as a permanent card record. It is printed on two sides:

NAME				ROLL NO.				CLASS NO. (IN PENCIL)			
ADDRESS (IN PENCIL)						FLOOR		DATE		GRADE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL	
AGED		YEARS		MONTH		DAY		YEAR		BROUGHT BY	
		BORN								IN CLASS NO.	
FATHER'S NAME						MOTHER'S NAME					
NAME OF SOME PERSON OTHER THAN A RELATIVE						ADDRESS					
FATHER'S OCCUPATION						SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY APPLICANT					
HAS APPLICANT EVER ATTENDED THIS SCHOOL? IF POSSIBLE STATE WHEN						BAPTISED		IF MEMBER OF CHURCH, WHAT CHURCH AND WHERE			
OTHER MEMBERS OF FAMILY IN THIS SCHOOL											
PARENTS ATTEND CHURCH AT										MEMBERS?	
GRADE ENTERED OR PROMOTED INTO		GRADE		BEGINNERS		PRIMARY		JUNIOR		INTER.	
DATE LEFT OR DROPPED										GRADE	

[illegible]

THE SECRETARY

This card, different in color from the foregoing, is used as a permanent record of marks received in a school where credits are given for attendance, punctuality, deportment and work done:

[illegible][illegible]

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

In addition to the birthday records kept in the different grades of the Elementary Department, a card should be kept by the general secretary as a permanent birthday record, so that the member's birthday is known, no matter how many times he has been promoted or in what department he may be.

The card is useful for many purposes, but one use should never be neglected. It should act as a reminder to send a birthday greeting to the pupil. Let it be remembered, too, that the greeting should be sent just at the proper time. This is the card:

BIRTHDAY		MONTH	DAY	YEAR
NAME (IN PENCIL)				
ADDRESS (IN PENCIL)				
CLASS NO. (IN PENCIL)	DATE (IN PENCIL)		ROLL NO.	
TEACHER'S NAME				
DEPARTMENT				
REMARKS				
THE "OLIVET" S. S. CARD RECORD SYSTEM				

Note.—Form 3 of this system is an exact duplicate of form 2 in everything except color. When a person leaves the school and afterwards returns, his record from the time of his return is kept on a card of a color different from that of form 2. Form 2 is white; 3 is green.

The following cards and envelopes, published by the Westminster Press, explain themselves:

THE SECRETARY

Date of Enrollment			SUNDAY SCHOOL		Number Roll Class	
Mo.	Day	Year	Church			
Name			Birthday			
Address						
Baptized			Church Member			
Parents Members of Church			What Church			
Transferred to Class No.			Date			
Left the School—Date			Why			

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, PHILA., PA.

PUPIL'S ATTENDANCE CARD FOR THE SECRETARY									
SCHOOL									
GRADE		Church						1913	
Senior								1914	
Intermediate								1915	
Junior									
Primary									
Entered School				Number		Roll		Class	
Month		Day		Year					
Name									
Address									

1st Quarter					2nd Quarter					3rd Quarter					4th Quarter				
Jan	1	2	3	4	Apr	1	2	3	4	July	1	2	3	4	Oct.	1	2	3	4
Feb	1	2	3	4	May	1	2	3	4	Aug	1	2	3	4	Nov	1	2	3	4
Mar	1	2	3	4	June	1	2	3	4	Sept.	1	2	3	4	Dec.	1	2	3	4

THE WESTMINSTER PATENT PHILA., PA
THE WESTMINSTER CARD RECORD SYSTEM

BIBLE CLASS ENROLLMENT CARD

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

INTRODUCED BY _____ DATE OF ENROLLMENT _____

CHURCH RELATION _____

WASHINGTON STATE DISTRICT

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

TEACHER'S ATTENDANCE CARD FOR THE SECRETARY			
GRADE	SCHOOL		1911
Senior			
Intermediate		Church	1912
Junior			1913
Primary			
Entered School		Number	
		Roll	Class
Month	Day	Year	
Name			
Address			
1st Quarter		2nd Quarter	
Jan. 1 2 3 4 5	April 1 2 3 4 5	3rd Quarter	
Feb. 1 2 3 4	May 1 2 3 4 5	July 1 2 3 4 5	
Mar. 1 2 3 4 5	June 1 2 3 4 5	Aug. 1 2 3 4 5	
		Sept. 1 2 3 4 5	
		4th Quarter	
		Oct. 1 2 3 4 5	
		Nov. 1 2 3 4 5	
		Dec. 1 2 3 4 5	
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, PHILA. PA.		THE WESTMINSTER CARD RECORD SYSTEM	

BIRTHDAY RECORD	
Name	Month
Address	Day
Department	Year
Entered	19
Class	
Teacher	
Promotions	

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, PHILA. PA.

TEACHER'S CLASS ENVELOPE.	CLASS NO.
Teacher.	
<u>INSTRUCTIONS:</u>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These envelopes will be distributed to the respective teachers at every Sunday School session, each envelope containing all the cards for that class, viz:—one for each pupil (also to-day's Report Slip). 2. The Teacher will remove from the envelope the cards of absent pupils, leaving only those of pupils present at the session in the envelope. 3. The Secretary will collect the envelopes and the cards of the absent pupils, and after punching the space for that Sunday, he will replace the cards in the envelope, which he retains until the next week. 4. Under no circumstances destroy a card; use the <i>To-day's Report Slip</i> to report to the Secretary when a pupil has left the School with the date and cause of leaving. If a pupil enters the class, report it to the secretary, and if the pupil is from another class or department of the School, be very particular to mention it. 5. Revise the list of your pupils at the end of every quarter. 	
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, PHILA. PA.	The Westminster Card Record System

IV

HIS REPORTS

WHAT advertising is to the well-regulated business, reports are to the Sunday school: they keep the members intelligently informed of what is going on, they show reasons for encouragement, and they point out where increased effort must be put forth in order to maintain present standards and go forward to higher achievements. While the secretary is not the only officer who has it in his power to benefit the school by his reports, those given by him are of the utmost importance. The secretary's reports are of many kinds and should be made to various agencies and individuals.

In the Superintendent's Council.—The Superintendent's Council is composed of a small number of officers of the school. It is called by other names, such as The Superintendent's Cabinet, The Superintendent's Advisory Committee, or The Executive Committee. Its chief function is to be well informed concerning the work of all departments of the school, and to plan ahead in such a way that the school may be kept on its highest plane of efficiency. The secretary should be a member of this Council. To it he should render at its regular meetings reports giving facts concerning the school's condition and needs. From time to time he should furnish information on which may be based intelligent action by the Coun-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

cil in planning for the development of the work of the school.

In Teachers' Meetings.—Whatever meetings are held in connection with the Sunday school for the study of the lesson and instruction in principles of teaching, there should be in addition regular meetings for the purpose of transacting the business of the school. Ordinarily, such meetings are held once a month. An annual meeting should also be held, at which the work of the year is reviewed and the work of the coming year previewed. To these business meetings should come suggestions from the Council. In many cases it is wise for the Council to work out plans of procedure so that very much time may not be spent in the teachers' meetings in discussing unimportant details. At these teachers' meetings the secretary's reports will furnish data on which intelligent action may be based. Other reports given by him should indicate whether plans adopted have been helpful or otherwise.

To the School.—Many Sunday schools receive a report from the secretary concerning the attendance of the Sunday preceding. A better plan, and one which is successfully carried out in some schools, is for the secretary to report toward the close of the session what has actually taken place in the school on that day. The following facts should be included in such a report, which may be varied according to the size of the school:

The attendance in each department—teachers, boys, girls, men, women; the attendance of officers; the number of visitors; the number of tardy officers, teachers and

THE SECRETARY

pupils; the total attendance; the per cent of attendance to enrollment for the day and for the corresponding day of the previous year; the offering for the day, for the previous Sunday and for the corresponding Sunday of the previous year; remarks as to weather, unusual circumstances, etc.

For smaller schools, the following, taken from Fergusson's Ideal Record for Small Sunday Schools, is suggestive:

Special reports should be made from time to time in order to tell the members of the school what has been accomplished, or to spur them on to attempting greater things in their school life and work. Reports put in attractive form and hung in accessible places in the school-room or building often produce marked results; for all interested may consult these reports at their leisure and make helpful deductions as the result of studying them.

To the Departments.—In a large school each department will naturally have its own secretary, who will keep in available form the records of that department. The general secretary of the school, however, will also keep records of all departments, for the school must be considered as a whole. From time to time the secretary will report concerning the various departments as a whole, or will make reports to departments of facts or figures concerning other departments.

To the Superintendent.—The progressive superintendent uses his eyes incessantly in order to keep informed concerning the condition of his school. By close and intelligent ob-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

servation he is able frequently to understand just what is needed in order to prevent deterioration in certain directions, and also to prepare for advancement in other directions. Most helpful to him will be reports furnished by the secretary, who deals largely with figures. There should be, therefore, not only the closest harmony between superintendent and secretary, but the latter should be on the alert to help the former by furnishing him data on which to base intelligent thought and action.

To Other Officers.—The other officers of the Sunday school may desire information which the secretary can rightly furnish from his records. Such information should always be forthcoming when asked for, and at times should be given before the request is made. For example, the librarian of the Sunday school may get figures from the secretary which will enable him to decide whether the library is being made use of by the school. The treasurer may obtain statistics which will help him in appealing to the school for the funds for which he is responsible.

To the Denomination.—Those who have had much to do with the compilation of denominational statistics are tempted to lose faith in human nature. They have found that it is very difficult to get figures from some churches, and they have also discovered that the figures furnished are not always as reliable as they should be. In many cases the denominational statistics include those of the Sunday school. Hence, the secretary of the school may do much, not only for his denomination but for the Church at large, by furnishing to those who have the right to ask for them

THE SECRETARY

correct and up-to-date reports of the facts of his Sunday school.

To the Organized Work.—If the Sunday school is situated in a city, there is probably a city or county interdenominational Sunday-school association which asks for statistics of every school within its bounds. These figures are not asked for capriciously or thoughtlessly. It is of importance that accurate figures should be obtained and passed on, so that the world may be kept informed as to the true numerical status of the Sunday school as an institution. Sometimes it is a state association or even the International Sunday School Association that asks for figures. The Christian secretary should consider it his privilege as well as duty to furnish such figures, so that reports may be correct.

V

HIS RELATIONSHIPS

NEXT to the superintendent, the secretary comes into most frequent and closest relationship with the largest number of persons in the Sunday school. Either personally or through his assistants he should be in constant and helpful contact with all departments of the school. His office should combine the functions of a bureau of information and a bureau of exchange. The personality of the secretary will determine his relationship with the various individuals and agencies with which he is officially brought into contact.

To the Superintendent.—Just as the engineer is indispensable to the captain of a steamboat, the secretary ought to be the dependable helper of the superintendent of the Sunday school. The relationship between these two should be cordial and responsive. While the superintendent gives the secretary due credit for his efforts, the latter should act on the theory that he is to afford every possible assistance to the former. When either officer stands on his rights, the school suffers; when both forget self in the effort to help each other, the school is greatly benefited. A little of the milk of human kindness helps marvelously even in the routine work of the Sunday school.

To the Assistants.—Even in the smallest Sunday school the secretary should endeavor to have an assistant. If there

THE SECRETARY

is not enough work for two persons, an assistant is essential. There are times when the secretary is absent; then the assistant, who has had some experience, can carry on the secretary's work and the school need not suffer. The secretary may move away or he may be disabled. No time is wasted in the endeavor to secure a successor where an assistant has been broken in. In large schools there should be assistants in sufficient numbers to do the necessary secretarial work so that no one person will be unduly burdened with it. While the secretary must necessarily direct his assistants, all his dealings with them should be with that love that suffereth long and is kind, that vaunteth not itself, that is not puffed up, that is not easily provoked and that endureth all things.

To the Substitutes.—In a great railway system there is not only an assistant ready to take the place of everyone who occupies an important position, in the event of his disability, but there is a substitute ready in an emergency to take the place of the assistant. This arrangement is necessary, for no one can predict what may occur on a railway. In addition to his assistant the secretary should have a substitute ready at any time to take the place of the latter. The number of substitutes should at least equal the number of assistants. The aim of the secretary should be to instruct and encourage these substitutes so that they shall be ready and willing to assume responsibility when the necessity for doing so arises.

To the Members of the School.—"Come to me when you want anything and I shall do the best I can to help you" is an expression that should indicate the relationship of the

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

secretary to other officers of the school, to teachers and to pupils. His manifested, sincere desire to be helpful will encourage others to come to him, and in return he will find that others are willing to coöperate with him when he desires assistance. The secretary who is careful to maintain a cordial relationship with all the members of the school will rarely have to complain that they do not respond to his requests. The secretary who is badly treated by his fellow workers should look into a mirror to ascertain why people are not friendly to him.

To the Church.—The Sunday school is a department of the church. Everything that can be done to emphasize the school's relationship to the church helps both school and church. The secretary may do much good by furnishing to the pastor and to the church officers such reports as will keep the church membership informed concerning the school. He should be in a position to bring to the school facts and suggestions that will keep its members interested in the church. The cordial relationship that should exist between church and Sunday school may be cemented by a secretary who appreciates how necessary such a union is in the work of the kingdom of God.

To Institutes.—The day has come in some places when the work of the Sunday-school secretary receives proper consideration at conventions and institutes. As the vision of the value of his work broadens, more attention will be paid to his office in the large and the small gatherings of Sunday-school workers. A conference of secretaries ought to be held in connection with every county and every state convention. When such conferences are held

THE SECRETARY

the secretary should make much of the opportunity of helping and of being helped. An alert secretary will join with his fellow secretaries in the endeavor to hold such conferences where they have not yet become the fashion, for the interchange of ideas and the comparison of methods will benefit greatly the schools represented.

To Visitors.—In a well-regulated school in a large city there is a reception committee. A member of this committee greets every visitor to the school and seats him where he may have a good view of what is going on. After the opening devotional services there is a time set for visiting the various departments. Each visitor is asked if there is any department in which he is especially interested or concerning which he would like particular information. Frequently the desire is expressed for a visit to the secretary's room, for the visitor has heard how carefully the records are kept. The visitor is not disappointed; he not only receives many hints that he can apply in his own work, but he is so courteously treated by the secretary and his assistants that he leaves the room with a very greatly enlarged conception of how helpful a secretary may be, not only to his own school but also to agencies and individuals outside the local church.

VI

HIS NOTEBOOK

MUCH has been said and a little has been written concerning the superintendent's notebook. Equally necessary and valuable is a well-kept notebook for the secretary. The difference between efficiency and inefficiency, between helpfulness and harmfulness, is often explained by the secretary's dependence on his notes or on his memory. There are a few individuals whose memory is so well trained and so constantly exercised in the proper manner that they are exempt from the notebook habit, but until their number is vastly increased recommendations concerning this much-needed adjunct to successful work in the secretary's department are in order.

Where shall the secretary of the Sunday school use his notebook?

In School.—As he goes from class to class, as he listens to individuals seeking information or help, as he observes the various devotional and special services of the school, as he attends the meetings of the Council and of the teachers, as he acts on committees, his ever-ready book will enable him to jot down notes, to be written out more fully when there is time, and to be considered carefully and acted upon when the proper occasion arrives.

Moreover, a reference to the notebook will recall what might otherwise be forgotten, and its hints will prove at

THE SECRETARY

times just what is necessary to throw light on a perplexing subject, to suggest the best course of action when in doubt or to give the information that is so helpful.

At Home.—Of course, the sort of secretary we have in mind thinks of his work and plans for it outside of the school session as well as during the hour itself. He does not leave his notebook in his desk, but carries it in his pocket. When suggestions that may prove beneficial to the Sunday school flash through his mind as a result of prayer, of thought, of conversation, of reading or of study, he makes them usable by appropriate entries in his book, which are afterwards put into more permanent form and carefully consulted.

But this is not all. From time to time the secretary must carefully look over his notes in order to ascertain whether he has made the best possible use of them. This rereading and reviewing of his memoranda will convince him that it is very easy to forget entries of value, and that seemingly trivial matters are of great importance when put into their proper places.

Abroad.—If that superintendent is foolish who never finds time to visit Sunday schools other than his own, what shall be said of the secretary who never goes abroad to learn what others are doing? When he visits another Sunday school, when he talks to a brother secretary, when he attends a meeting of secretaries or other Sunday-school workers, the developing secretary makes notes for future study, verification or experiment. Business methods are bristling with suggestions for him who will note them and at the proper time adopt what is applicable to his

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

work. He who runs may read, but he will soon forget unless he makes notes.

If you have formed the notebook habit, examine the book and yourself to determine whether or not you have made the best use of your notes. If you have not formed this habit, begin at once to develop it. Keep two notebooks for Sunday-school suggestions: a small book to be always at hand, in which original entries are made, and a larger book, in which some notes may be preserved until they are no longer of value.

VII

HIS MATERIAL AND LITERATURE

THE following records are published by the Westminster Press:

The Westminster Ideal Class Book contains space for twenty names and a record for a year.

The Ideal Secretary's Record for Small Sunday Schools, by E. Morris Fergusson. This record is for schools of not more than ten classes.

Tomlinson's Improved Sabbath-school Record and Pocket Registry.

The Westminster Ideal Sunday-school Record. A record of a school of twenty-five classes for four years. Every department of a modern Sunday school is provided for. When properly kept, all information needed on any occasion will be at hand.

From time to time helpful articles on the work of the Sunday-school secretary appear in periodicals devoted to Sunday-school work. By studying the advertisements of these periodicals the wide-awake secretary will get many valuable hints.

No secretary who wishes to make the most of himself can afford to fail to read Chapters III and VII of *How to Conduct a Sunday School*, by Marion Lawrance.

"From a Superintendent's Notebook" is the title of a chapter in *Sunday School Success*, by Amos R. Wells, that will furnish many hints to the inquiring secretary.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice, by Henry Frederick Cope, has a paragraph on each of the following officers:

General Secretary.

Corresponding Secretary.

Enrollment Secretary.

Division Secretaries.

Report Cards.

Reports and Announcements.

How to Make the Sunday School Go, by A. T. Brewer, has a chapter headed "The Secretary," which is very suggestive. Here is one paragraph of it: "This officer should be a devoted Christian, punctual, tireless, affable, accurate, quick, sympathetic, impartial, loyal, generous, versatile, and he should have a faultless memory." Truly, this is a standard to which but few attain!

A Model Superintendent, by H. Clay Trumbull, contains an illuminating section headed, "Among the Records," in which the importance of the secretary's work is clearly and minutely set forth.

The Sunday School of To-day, by Dr. Wm. Walter Smith, devotes several pages to "The Secretarial Force." Dr. Smith urges the appointment of a Custodian of Supplies, a Custodian of Equipment and a Superintendent of Absentees.

A Manual of Sunday-school Methods, by Dr. Addison Pinneo Foster, contains suggestions concerning the secretary's duties, his records and his qualifications.

The Organized Sunday School, by J. W. Axtell, is a working manual for officers. The chapter on "The Secretary" shows how important this officer is, what he is to do for the welfare of the school and how he is to do it.

THE SECRETARY

It contains two suggestive cuts—one depicting an attendance record; the other, an attendance chart.

Sunday-school Records, Reports and Recognition, by E. A. Fox, contains much that is helpful.

By examining these and similar books on Sunday-school work the secretary may test his own methods and receive inspiration for progressive service in behalf of the great cause represented by the Sunday school.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

III

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

BY

AMOS R. WELLS

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

I

THE TREASURER

WHY is it that so often we lavish care upon the selection of a Sunday-school superintendent, are measurably careful in our choice of a secretary, but when we come to the office of treasurer fill it with the first person that pops into our heads? Is this like the money-heeding, practical people we are supposed to be? Is it even businesslike?

The Necessity of Care in His Selection.—The money interests of the school are very important. If the officers and teachers lack proper tools to work with, if they are kept from taking advance steps from lack of supplies, the fiber of the entire school will relax. If the school finances are allowed to fall into disorder, nothing short of scandals will arise. Hardly anything will so injure the reputation of the school as financial irregularities or even the suspicion of them. For every reason it is quite necessary to choose for treasurer a wide-awake, earnest, competent and respected business man (or woman). Yet carelessness in this important particular is rather the rule than the exception.

This is the more surprising when we remember that the office of treasurer affords a rare opportunity to place a "plain business man" in a prominent position in the Sun-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

day school, and that usually just the right man may easily be persuaded to take up the congenial work. It does not require speech-making, but calls for just the abilities he possesses and exercises every day in his business. Under the circumstances to put a tyro into the position of treasurer is a foolish blunder.

The Requirements.—What we want, then, as Sunday-school treasurer is a man (or a woman) of character, of such standing among the business men of the church that he can readily obtain subscriptions from them for the special needs of the school. This implies, of course, that he is a capable manager of his own affairs, or he would not be regarded as fit to conduct the business of a Sunday school. It implies also that he has tact, vigor, perseverance, orderliness, accuracy—all the fundamental qualities necessary for business success. It goes without saying that he must be absolutely honest and an out-and-out Christian. Dozens of men in your church answer to this description, and you may lay your hands upon one of them for treasurer, thus binding him to the interests of the school and winning a powerful ally.

Magnifying His Office.—But urge your treasurer to magnify his office. Tell him before you elect him that you want no mere accountant, no mere recorder. You want some one who will get the money as well as set it down and pay it out. You want a treasurer who will be a vital factor in the development of the school. If his predecessor has not been of this type, he is not to imitate him in this respect, but he is to strike out for himself in new ways. In other words, urge him to consider the

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

Sunday school as a new business which he is to open up and "make a big thing." He will appreciate such an enterprise far more than a namby-pamby task.

The treasurer, on being elected, will consider first how much money he should raise, and for what purposes it is needed. To learn this he will consult the superintendent and his cabinet, including all the teachers.

The Sunday-School Budget.—The school should have a regular budget, comprising its gifts to missions and other causes, the estimated expenditures for each department of the school and for the school at large, and all special expenditures that it may be desired to make, as for a stereopticon or a set of stereoscopes and their photographs.

This budget will be made out with great care. If the treasurer has former budgets to guide him, all the better; but too many schools have been in the habit of feeling their way through the year with no financial prospectus to follow.

Such a budget will constitute the treasurer's program of work. He will place it before the church in asking for money from the church treasury. He will present it to business men in seeking special gifts. He will use it for the school in determining a proper standard for their contributions. The budget will not be so large as to be discouraging and all but preclude success, and it will be large enough, within reason, to furnish an incentive for exertion and promptings to liberality.

The Treasurer's Funds.—The treasurer, ordinarily, has three sources of supply for his treasury. The first of these is the church. That the church should appropriate money for its Sunday school would seem to need no argu-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

ment, and yet not all churches make such an appropriation, and many fail to appropriate with sufficient liberality. The treasurer, aided by the superintendent, should approach the church officers, especially the church treasurer and Finance Committee and the leading church members, and endeavor to obtain for the school an appropriation commensurate with the means of the church and the work the Sunday school should be doing for the children of the church and the community.

It may be necessary to urge this appropriation in some church meeting or before some committee, and here the superintendent and the treasurer may well speak for the school, showing what the school is doing, what more it could do and precisely for what purposes the money asked for would be expended if granted. Make an especial point of the necessity, if the young are to be trained in the art of giving, that the greater part of the school collections shall be given to benevolences, to the various denominational boards and to the enterprises of the local church.

Ask for every cent that is wanted and needed, prepare your plea with pains and present it with energy. Then accept with good grace what the church gives, making so fine use of it that the church will gladly give more next time. To this end, take pains throughout the year to keep the church informed, fully and interestingly, regarding the work which the school is accomplishing.

The second source of money for the school is the subscription list or what answers to it. In any live school the necessity will frequently arise for special gifts, that special improvements may be made. These may not have been foreseen when the school budget was presented to the church; or, if they were foreseen, it may not have

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

been wise to include them in the request for money that was presented to the church.

Every Sunday-school treasurer should have or should form a list of Sunday-school supporters, friends of the school who are willing to prove their friendship by their purses. It may be thought wise to constitute these into a formal company, a sort of board of directors of the school; or, it may be best to leave the whole matter flexible and informal.

In either case the school should cultivate these generous friends, and the treasurer may well be the one who shall keep them informed regarding the work of the school, approaching them often concerning school matters that do not require their financial aid, but only their sympathetic and encouraging presence. A school with such a set of strong backers, enlarged through the years and zealously maintained, is well insured against failure.

The third source of the Sunday-school money is the school itself, as a whole—the weekly class offerings. As already said, it is best for the children that these offerings, in the main, should be devoted to benevolent objects, though some especial need of the school may now and then be met by school collections. These benevolent objects should be as diversified as possible, so as to acquaint the pupils with many worthy objects, though not so diversified that they will become confused and remember nothing clearly. Sometimes the object of the offerings may be changed as often as every two weeks, but usually every month is often enough.

Special Objects.—The objects should include the Sunday-school board of the denomination and its home and

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

foreign mission boards, and perhaps other church boards, if the denominational work is more finely divided. They may also include local charities. They should certainly include any missionary or other philanthropic enterprise which the local church has adopted as its own. The Sunday-school cabinet should choose the list of objects with great care, and it is not at all necessary that it should be altogether the same from year to year.

Every class will have its treasurer, who will "take up the collection." The school treasurer may well hold a meeting of these young treasurers, talk to them about the importance of giving to the Lord's work, and urge them to push the matter in their respective classes. Tell them, however, especially if there are in the school many children from poor families, that what is to be looked after is not so much the size of the gifts as their regularity, and that every member of the class should give something. The value of the class collection envelope system is so well known now that the use of it need hardly be urged.

The Finance Committee.—Any treasurer will be greatly helped in his work by a Finance Committee, and in a large school this committee is almost a necessity. The Finance Committee will be made up of such men (and women) as the treasurer himself; and large givers, interested in the school, may be closely associated with the work by appointment to this committee. The committee will aid the treasurer in obtaining special subscriptions and in obtaining proper sums from the church treasury.

For the recording of these various sums the treasurer will provide himself with proper books, at least a daybook, in which to enter the money in chronological order as it is

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

received and paid out, and a ledger in which to keep separate accounts with the various Sunday-school committees to whose chairmen payments are frequently made, and with the church treasurer, through whom, probably, the gifts of the school will be sent to the various objects to which the school contributes. It will be well also to keep separate accounts with the various objects of your gifts, so that you may turn at once to the complete record of the school with relation to any benevolence.

Safeguards.—Of course the treasurer will keep his own money entirely separate from the money of the school, to a cent. Any other course is absolutely dishonest, and this is true no matter how small the amount may be. The entire sum in charge of the treasurer must be ready to be produced at any time, and instantly.

For his own protection, the treasurer will insist upon a receipt for every cent he pays out, and these vouchers will be kept carefully on file. The Sunday-school constitution should state definitely the conditions under which the treasurer should pay out money, and if orders from the superintendent or secretary are required, these orders will be filed with the receipts.

Also for his own protection the treasurer will insist that an auditor should be appointed once a year to examine his accounts just before he makes his annual report to the school and the church, and the auditor's report will immediately follow the treasurer's. All records will be kept in businesslike form that will be approved by any business man appointed as auditor. Carelessness or ignorance here will condemn the school among the men who should be the most liberal givers to it. Especially is it necessary

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

that the records should be accurate to a cent; and to this end the treasurer must record immediately every penny received or disbursed, not trusting anything to his memory or postponing any clerical work.

It will add much to the reputation of the school if the treasurer is very prompt in paying the school debts. Religious organizations are generally considered "slow but sure" in the matter of payments. The first half of the characterization is a discredit, and our treasurers should remove it as far as possible. Our creditors need the money promptly, and we should make it a point of honor to see that they get it.

Making Reports.—The final item of the treasurer's duties is his report. He reports every Sunday the offering of that day, with such additions as will increase interest in giving. He should report the state of the treasury to the Sunday-school officers often enough to keep them informed if the offerings are falling off. And once a year he makes a report to the Sunday school and to the church. The latter reports should not be so detailed as to be tiresome, and yet they should be full enough to give a clear idea of the sources of income and the principal expenditures.

It is well to report every Sunday, for a while, the offering of every class. This must be done in writing, using a blackboard or a large sheet of manila paper. Letters and figures should be large enough to be read easily across the room. The class offerings for at least a month should be shown in tabular form for ready comparison and for stimulating interest in the offerings.

Usually, however, it is sufficient simply to report totals,

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

for the departments or for the entire school. The totals for the preceding Sunday and for the corresponding Sunday a year before will also be given to furnish a basis of comparison.

Brightness and originality in making these weekly reports will be well repaid. "Look at this!" the treasurer may print in red letters as preface to a poor report. "Fine!" he may print below a particularly good showing. He may cover the figures with a strip of paper on which he has printed "I'm ashamed of this," and when the time for his report comes he may remove the paper without a word. He and the superintendent may stand on each side of the report, pointing to it silently. He may have the school repeat the figures after him, to impress them on their memory. He may have the banner class in giving step to the platform, and ask the school to rise in honor of them. Many other methods will suggest themselves as soon as the treasurer begins to try to brighten his report.

But in conclusion let me emphasize what I have already said, that what we are seeking from the children's gifts is not income, but education. We want to teach them to give. We want to show them what to give to. We want to get them into the habit of giving generously and systematically. In proportion as he accomplishes this, the treasurer will be a glorious success.

II

THE LIBRARIAN

The Ideal Librarian.—The ideal Sunday-school librarian is perhaps more difficult to find than even the ideal Sunday-school superintendent. This is not because the librarian must be a book-lover and well acquainted with books, for there are many such; but he must be able to inspire in others a love for books and guide them into the best paths of literature, and that is a rare ability. It implies a knowledge of human nature as well as of books; it implies charm and tact and ingenuity and enterprise and perseverance; in short, it implies all the qualities of the successful merchant—thorough familiarity with his goods and power to make folks want them. You may not be able to find the ideal librarian; but if not, then you must content yourself with the nearest available approximation thereto.

I wish it might be taken for granted that the librarian would read all the books in the library, but I fear that this fundamental qualification must be insisted on. With all the books the librarian must be thoroughly familiar—books for the little folks as well as for the adults—if he is to introduce them successfully to the school.

The Library Committee.—The librarian must have a wide range of reading outside the library, that he may not miss the best books for the library. In this task of selection, however, he must be aided by a Library Committee, which

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

will be a part of the machinery of every well-ordered school. Men as well as women should be members of this committee, and at least one alert pupil for every department of the school, preferably a boy and a girl from each department. The last stage of a book's acceptance will be its interest for these latter. This Library Committee will read all the books proposed for the library, and no book should be accepted to which a majority of the committee object on the ground of moral teachings or literary character and interest.

Securing the Books.—The librarian's first problem, especially in small schools with little money, is to get the books. In most cases it will be possible to persuade the church Finance Committee to set apart a modest sum each year for additions to the school library; or, if the church makes its appropriation in a lump sum, the school officers may regularly set aside a sum for library increase and maintenance. Private gifts of money may also be sought if the Finance Committee of the school is willing that the librarian should make a little canvass for the purpose. Many will give books who cannot give money. The librarian may call for duplicates from private libraries and little-worn copies of books that have been read sufficiently by the owner. A book social may be held, admission to which is a book for the library. The entertainment at this social will be bookish games, such as the representation of the names of famous books by articles worn on the clothing. All books received by private gift should be read by the Library Committee and passed upon as carefully as books obtained from the store or the publishers.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

It is almost always possible for schools to get books at reduced prices. Avoid, however, the "sets" that are sometimes offered to libraries, bound cheaply and uniformly, and containing, with some good books, many others of very inferior character. If such a set is bought, make every volume pass muster by itself.

Money for buying new books may be obtained from a strictly managed system of fines for keeping books over time. Explain to the parents the use made of the fines and they will be entirely willing to pay them. Promptness in returning books will be encouraged by such a system, though the librarian may desire to encourage tardiness!

Help from the Public Library.—Some public libraries are now making up collections of perhaps fifty books and lending them to Sunday schools. The collection is made up on consultation with the school librarian, and, within certain limitations, contains just what books the latter may select from the public-library catalogue. The collection remains with the school for a few months, and is then replaced by a new one. It contains books for all ages, and is a most useful supplement to any library. If any book in the collection proves especially popular, a copy may be purchased for the permanent library of the school. If books are lost or injured, they must, of course, be replaced by the school. If possible, in all such cases, the parents should pay for the books which their children have injured or lost.

Book Reviews and Catalogues.—For learning about new books that are really worth while nothing is better than the reviews printed in discriminating periodicals. One

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

soon learns which reviewers to trust. It is also essential to obtain descriptive catalogues from all the publishers, and they will be glad to put the librarian upon their list for copies of all their announcements of new books. The librarian, through the church paper and in other ways, will invite suggestions as to books from all members of the church, and will receive many valuable hints if the request is kept before the church members.

The Books Required.—What kinds of books will be placed in the Sunday-school library? These libraries to-day are very different from the old-time type. They are far wider in their scope, much better in their literary quality, much finer in their influence. The modern Sunday-school library may include any book on any subject that will awaken minds to the wonders of God's creation and furnish a stimulus to better living. Not all the books will be technically religious, but all will be really and profoundly religious. The Sunday-school library of my boyhood was largely fiction, and fiction of a peculiar "goody-goody" type that is now happily obsolete. I read many of the books, but I do not recall a single incident or character. At the same time, outside the school, I was reading Irving, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Miss Muloch, George Macdonald,—yes, and Miss Alcott, Trowbridge and "Oliver Optic,"—and what I read "stuck."

The Sunday-school library will contain a liberal amount of fiction, but fiction of the very best, calculated to inform the mind, quicken the imagination and exalt the character by unconscious emulation of heroic action. Fiction is pressed upon the children from so many directions, and

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

it is so often corrupting and trivial, that the Sunday-school library will benefit them immensely if it do no more than introduce them to the best sort of stories.

The Need of Biographies.—But the chief work of the librarian is to widen the children's interest (and often the interest of adults as well) from fiction out into the wide range of literature. To this end the library will contain a splendid store of biographies. Nothing is better than the lives of great missionaries, for these are full of the dash and heroism that particularly appeal to youth. But add the lives of great inventors, reformers, discoverers, statesmen, rulers—any real leaders of men. There are fewer volumes of history that will be read by the young, but they are to be found, and they are especially valuable for Sunday-school libraries. There are many fascinating books of travel which the young folks will enjoy, many books of popular science, many volumes of poems, many series of delightful essays. I am not naming specific books because I should not know where to stop.

Two Dozen Books.—If I had to select two dozen books for a Sunday-school library I should choose two volumes of missionary biography, two of general biography, three volumes of popular science, one each of history, travel, poetry and essays, and thirteen volumes of fiction. I should not by any means select new books solely, but many of these should be the old and standard books that will always be fresh and vital.

The Reference Library.—I have not mentioned books about the Bible and volumes dealing with the Sunday

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

school and its work, because these should be placed in the reference library, which should be a popular part of every school. This reference library will be under the care of the librarian, who will see that it is thoroughly used by teachers and pupils. The reference library in my own Sunday school is in a large bookcase in the prayer-meeting room, kept unlocked. Anyone may take out a book, merely recording the title of the book, the name of the borrower and the date, on a card, which is to be deposited in a box on a shelf. When a book is returned this card is torn up.

The reference library will contain the best Bible dictionary the school can afford, the best Bible atlas or work on Bible geography, the best set of commentaries on the entire Bible, the most valuable works on Bible customs and travels in Bible lands. There will be a history of Bible times and works on the history of our English Bible, with accounts of excavations in Bible lands. There will be a goodly number of books on methods of teaching and the history and work of the Sunday school. Add to all this some special books dealing with the particular series of lessons the school is studying, and you will have a collection that the teachers can make of the greatest assistance, if they only will. Part of the librarian's business is to interest the teachers and older pupils in the reference library by pointing out books and portions of books which deal helpfully with the lesson of the next Sunday. This may best be done in the teachers' meetings.

Help on the Lessons.—Similarly, the librarian will choose books from the general library of the school that will be useful in connection with coming lessons. He

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

may make his selection far in advance and post the list in the schoolroom, stating in connection with each book title for what lesson it is appropriate. The teachers will try to have their pupils read these books and tell about them in the recitations. Many of them will furnish good illustrations for the lessons.

Renewing the Library.—Try to add a certain number of books to the library each year. If you exceed that number, well; but try never to fall below it. Even a small addition every year means a large library before you know it.

But what is to be done when the books wear out—when the bindings become shaky and the pages are torn and loose?

My advice is to hold on to such books as long as possible, having them rebound in stout buckram and thoroughly mended. Their worn condition is proof that they are enjoyable books. Some schools give away such books to poorer schools, which is well, provided new copies of the same books are bought to take their places. We must remember that new pupils are all the time entering the school, and that the best recommendation they can have for a book is the advice from some older pupil to read it, "for it is perfectly splendid!"

Protecting the Books.—The librarian should occasionally speak to the entire school about the proper way to handle books, showing the school dirty, dog's-eared and torn volumes, and, by contrast, some that have been well kept. Emphasize the careful handling of books as a sign of culture. Do not be afraid to talk to the school in large

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

terms; the pupils will appreciate your addressing them as grown-ups and not as "just children."

Make a written note of the condition of each book before it is given out and as it is returned, so that you may discover which pupils handle the books roughly, and do a little personal work with them. You may take the classes containing these pupils and get their teachers to bring the pupils together to help you in a little "mending bee," in which markings shall be rubbed out and the books mended as well as possible. This will be a fine object lesson.

Keeping the Records.—Every pupil will have his own library card, on which he will keep at least six numbers of books he desires. Opposite each number will be stamped the date when the book is given him, and later the date when the book is returned. The librarian will have some list of the books by number, preferably a sheet of pasteboard with little pockets for slips of cardboard, each slip bearing the number and title of a book. A similar sheet with pockets for slips bearing the pupils' names and numbers will complete the outfit. Transpose the slip of the borrower and that of the book, marking the book number on the first slip and the date on the second slip, and your record is complete. When the book is returned, simply return each slip to its original place. Prompt inquiry for each book as soon as it is due will save many a volume to the library.

Getting the Books Read.—How shall the librarian do his most important work, get the pupils interested in the books? A printed catalogue is a great help here, espe-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

cially if below each title is a brief, attractive description of the book—one that will make mouths water. When new books are added to the library, distribute printed slips naming and describing them, these to be inserted in the catalogues. Advertise one new book a week by placing its name and the name of its author on the blackboard, with a word about it. If the school is small, allow access to the books before and after sessions—an invaluable custom, giving the opportunity for that personal stimulus and advice which may set many a young person on the way to wise reading.

A Library Meeting.—Get the help of the teachers. Devote a teachers' meeting to the subject, showing the teachers how great a help in their work the library may become, and advising them how to lead their pupils to use the library. Get also the help of the parents, sending them printed (or manifolded) letters about the school library and the pleasure and profit to be obtained from it.

Class Reading Clubs.—Get the teachers to form their classes into reading clubs, to meet once a fortnight, for reading aloud some book from the library. Offer rewards of good books to all who will spend at least fifteen minutes a day for a year reading the books of the Sunday-school library or other books approved by the librarian, and who will read through in the course of the year at least twelve books. Offer extra rewards to the two pupils, a girl and a boy, whose lists are the best in quality as well as in quantity. The parents will be glad to contribute toward paying for the books given as rewards.

THE TREASURER AND THE LIBRARIAN

Book Evenings.—Have “Sunday-school book evenings,” in which the different departments of the school are brought together, one at a time, and listen to accounts of the books in the library that will please them and at the same time be best worth while. Many of these accounts will be given by pupils who have read the books. Now and then have a bright speaker occupy five minutes of the general session of the school telling in a snappy way about a lot of good books, handing them out on the spot to those that want them. The assistant librarian will take the names of the borrowers.

Class Librarian.—Appoint a librarian in each class to push in that class the reading of good books. Hold meetings of these young librarians now and then, to tell them about the library books that will interest their classes, and discuss means of bringing these books to the attention of their friends. These class librarians may become your very best aids in the introduction of books.

The Librarian's Opportunity.—I realize that I have been laying out considerable work for the Sunday-school librarian, but I also realize the tremendous possibilities of his work. He comes closer to the young people than the public librarian. He can reach many boys and girls whose homes have no bookish atmosphere. He can plant a love for good books in many young lives, and this love will be not only a lasting joy to them, but will lead them to a perpetual source of wisdom and strength.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

IV

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

BY

REV. A. H. MCKINNEY, PH.D.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

I

WHY?

THE objections to grading a Sunday school are generally made by those who do not understand the reasons for the grading, or by those who do not know how to grade. It is for the former class that the following suggestions are given. In considering the matter of grading, five elements must be noted:

Personality.—In the personality of the pupils we find the chief reason for grading. The ideal method of instruction would be to have each pupil trained according to his personal characteristics and aptitudes. This, of course, is impossible. The next best method is to grade individuals so that the very greatest amount of attention may be paid to the personality of those who form each group. A boy is, in a certain sense, the same person for years; in another sense, he is not the same personality at nine years of age that he was at six. The boy of thirteen is quite different from what he was at nine years of age and from what he will be at seventeen. Hence, the marked results of the study of children and youth have dictated that they be graded according to their personalities. The first and, for the present purpose, the most practicable basis of grading is according to age. Where, however, there is material enough to grade more closely,

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

the personality of each individual may be taken into account in forming classes, and those most nearly alike grouped together.

Instruction.—It is true that the Bible is suited for all ages and conditions. It is not true, however, that all the Bible is suited for persons of a given age. There is much in the Bible, for example, that children of six years of age cannot and need not understand. It is true, also, that something for everyone may be found in every selection from the Scriptures assigned as a lesson; but what ought to be presented to given classes or departments will depend on many things. The teacher who gives the instruction that is most needed and helpful is the one who can suit that instruction to the capabilities of the largest number in her class. If, for example, a teacher has to instruct pupils varying in age from six to twelve, her task is much more difficult than if she were to present the lesson truths to pupils whose ages range from six to eight. Hence, the character of the instruction that ought to be given in the Sunday school demands grading.

Progress.—Over and over again has been repeated the cry: When young people apply for admission to the Church, in most cases, they have very hazy notions of Scriptural truth. Why? Not because they have not been instructed, not because they have not had faithful teachers who have earnestly desired to impart the truth. Why, then? Because, in most instances, the instruction given has been of a hazy, nebulous character; in other words, there has not been a systematic progression in facts imparted and truths enforced. This is due, in some cases,

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

to the employment of unskilled teachers in the Sunday school, and in other instances, to the fact that the teacher does as well as he can considering the variety in the pupils he is trying to instruct. That there may be systematic instruction in Biblical facts and truths, and that there may be a progression in the acquirement and understanding thereof by the pupils, there must be grading. When our Sunday schools are graded, both as to instructors and learners, church officials will not be so much astonished as at present concerning the lack of Biblical knowledge on the part of candidates for admission to the Church.

Fruitage.—We are learning very many important lessons from the farmer and horticulturist. The fruitage obtained as the result of understanding the nature of the harvest desired is amazing. That there is an increasing amount of fruitage as the result of Sunday-school instruction is evident. That this amount will be increased in the ratio of the proper grading of the Sunday school is believed by very many. God made the boy. God has ordained certain laws of the boy's spiritual as well as physical nature. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit is going to bless that one who works in harmony with God's laws rather than the one who disregards them? As the laws of the pupil's nature are apprehended and he is instructed in accordance therewith, we may look for greater spiritual results. The possibility of getting these results is largely increased where the proper kind of grading has been done. For the sake of the boy's temporal welfare, as well as for his eternal good, the school of which he is a member should be graded. This is true also of the girl and of the adult.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Attendance.—An old notion that pupils did not respond readily to a system of grading and consequent promotion has been exploded. In those schools which are carried on along the proper lines of grading there is always something to which the pupil may look forward and which may be held up to him as an incentive. When he finishes the work of one grade he is to be promoted into the next grade. This promotion is an honor which he appreciates and to which he looks forward. Hence, not only is the attendance of younger pupils larger and more regular in these schools which are graded than in others, but the pupils are kept longer in the school because of that to which they look forward.

A rigid investigation of many cases has revealed the fact that it was the teacher rather than the pupil who stood in the way of the latter's promotion into the grade in which he should be. Hence, it is confidently believed that when the conscientious teacher understands the reason for grading, his objections thereto will disappear, for he will realize their foolishness.

II

WHAT?

WHAT is a graded Sunday school will depend in a very large degree upon the numbers therein. There is no school that cannot be graded. A small school will of necessity have fewer departments than a large one. The larger Sunday schools will vary in their classification, for it needs no argument to prove that a school of a thousand can be graded much better than one of two hundred members. There are three respects at least in which a school may be graded, namely, in reference to:

The Curriculum.—The very first thing to be decided in grading a Sunday school is the curriculum to be pursued. In schools where the International Uniform Lessons are used there should be supplemental work according to which the school should be graded, so far as the subject matter to be taught is concerned.

There is a rapidly increasing number of schools which use the Graded Series of The International Sunday-school Lessons. This series affords a complete graded curriculum.

Some schools use this graded series for the classes of the Elementary Division and the Uniform lessons for all classes above the Junior Department. This gives a partially graded curriculum.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The Teachers.—In these days of specialization much attention is paid to the teachers employed in the various grades. The study of the characteristics of children, adolescents and adults has led to an appreciation of the fact that a teacher can do splendid work in instructing pupils of one age who would be a failure in the endeavor to be the leader of a class of another age; hence, in an increasing measure, attention is paid to the teacher selected for a certain grade or department of the school. In the degree that this selection is wisely made, does the school live up to its proper function, which is teaching the Word of God for the purpose of bringing souls to Christ and of building up souls in Christ. (See page 115, ff.)

The Pupils.—The grading of the school is for the sake of those instructed therein. One supreme consideration should overrule all others; namely, How may the members of this school receive the most benefit? This principle, ever kept in mind, will help in the determining of methods of grading and in the adoption of rules therefor.

On what bases should pupils be graded? is an important question. The answer may be given thus:

1. *Age.*—The most natural basis of division is the age of the pupil. While it is true that pupils of the same age differ, it is equally true that there are certain fundamental characteristics that may be predicated of children of about the same age. These characteristics determine, in a large degree, the kind of instruction that will be most helpful. Hence, in grading a school, the first endeavor should be to ascertain the ages of the pupils who are members thereof.

2. *Attainments.*—Where it is possible to grade with

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

greater exactness than that afforded by the difference in the ages of the pupils, the second consideration should be the endeavor to answer this question: What are the attainments of the various pupils coming within a given age limit? For example, from nine to twelve are the ages of pupils usually assigned to the Junior Department. If, as is frequently the case, that department is large enough to admit of its being subdivided into classes, the attainments of the pupils should be carefully considered when the subdivision is made.

3. *Capabilities*.—Two pupils of the same age and of the same attainments will differ in regard to their capabilities. One will learn much more readily than the other or, possibly, will retain much more of what is taught. Where the number of pupils is large enough to admit of it, this characteristic should be taken into account, and the division into classes governed not only by the age and attainments of the pupils but also by their ability to receive and retain what is taught.

Exceptions.—It must never be forgotten that there are exceptions to all rules. In dealing with human nature the exceptions must always be considered even if rules are to be broken. In a large school, well graded, there was a girl who, because of poverty in the home, was obliged to begin work at a very early age. Her educational advantages had been so limited that she was unable to read correctly. She had, however, a good spirit and was anxious to learn. An exception was made in her case and she was promoted from department to department without any regard to her reading ability. The superintendent of the school, knowing the girl's lack, selected

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

teachers who would treat her tenderly and whom he asked to cover up her deficiency. In this way she was advanced from grade to grade with very few in the school knowing that she could not read.

A class of boys was once promoted from the Junior Department into the Intermediate. They were of about the same age. Two of them developed very slowly physically. One of them grew so fast that in two years he seemed almost a giant in contrast to the two small lads. The other three members developed at a normal rate. Soon the big fellow became conspicuous in his class. It was noticed that he was restless and uneasy. Observation on the part of one accustomed to study boys led to the conclusion that he felt out of place with the two little fellows in his class and the three who were of normal size. A confidential chat with him one day led him to reveal his feelings, which were in accord with the suspicions of the observer. It did not take long to transfer him to a class of boys older than himself, but about his own size. Here he was happy, and the change doubtless kept him from leaving the school.

Another boy grew physically at a normal rate, but his intellectual development was retarded. It became a serious question what to do with him. If he were promoted with boys of his own age he would so feel his backwardness that he would be humiliated. After consultation with his mother the authorities of the school decided that an exception be made in his case, and he was retained among pupils of about his own capabilities until the time came when he could be made useful in connection with the work of the school, in a position which did not require any great mental ability.

III

HOW?

"MAKE haste slowly." Nowhere, perhaps, more than in the grading of a Sunday school should this well-worn motto be applied. Many conscientious workers have been offended, pupils have been driven away from the school and, in some cases, a general demoralization has resulted because of unwise haste in the attempt to do an excellent thing which was not fully understood by those for whose benefit it was planned. Here nothing is gained by haste; much may be lost. The following suggestions are made for those who wish to know what steps are necessary in the grading of a school which is altogether or partially ungraded:

Decide.—Decide just what is to be done. No two schools are exactly alike; in no two schools do exactly the same conditions exist. While the general scheme of grading remains the same, the particulars connected with plans and methods will vary according to the school. At first a very small committee should take the matter in hand, go over the ground very carefully and then decide just what is to be done.

Explain.—Explain to those concerned what is proposed to be done. After the committee have satisfied themselves as to the wisdom of the course they are about to advocate, there should be a meeting of the officers of

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

the school for the purpose of getting their criticisms of the plan. These should be carefully considered, and any difficulties likely to arise should be provided for in the plan suggested. After the wisdom of the officers has been made use of in modifying the methods proposed there should be a meeting of the teachers. Carefully and patiently the details of the proposed grading should be laid before the teachers, and they should be asked to give their opinion of what is to be done. Should any serious objections be offered, they should be carefully considered. Should any vital defects be pointed out, they should be remedied. All this, of course, takes time, but it will be time well expended.

Coöperation.—Obtain the coöperation of all concerned. The more careful the explanation given of what is about to be done, the greater the probabilities of securing the coöperation of those who are to be affected by what is proposed. The attention paid to the objections made, or suggestions offered, by the teachers, will determine, in a large degree, the amount of coöperation that may be expected from them.

Parents' Coöperation.—Officers, teachers and parents of the pupils should all be ready to coöperate in making the proposed grading a great success. Perhaps the most difficult class of persons to deal with will be the parents. They know that their children are attached to certain teachers; they do not know that what is proposed is for the benefit of their children; therefore, imagining that some hurt is to come to the latter, they are inclined to object to any plan which will separate them from their

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

present teachers. A sermon preached by the pastor, followed by a gathering of as many parents as can be induced to attend a meeting called for the purpose of explaining just what is about to be done, would result in the hearty coöperation of many who, because of their failure to understand what is in the minds of the officers of the school, might refuse to coöperate.

Nothing should be said directly to the pupils concerning grading until the plans therefor are well worked out, and the coöperation of as many of their elders as possible has been secured.

Gradual Progress.—Proceed by degrees. It is not necessary to revolutionize the whole school. The children under the age of thirteen may be graded at first, thus forming an elementary division. Attention may then be paid to the Intermediate Department, and by degrees the plans worked up into the Senior and Adult departments.

Should any class or department seriously object to the grading, it may be omitted from the general scheme. In time the benefits accruing from grading will bring this dissatisfied section into line with the others.

Correcting Mistakes.—Be willing to rectify mistakes. It goes without saying that where a number of persons is concerned and where plans affecting many are put into operation, there will be mistakes. It is not nearly so grievous to make a mistake as to be unwilling to recognize it and acknowledge it when it is made. The Superintendent's Council or some other authorized body of representative workers of the school should be con-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

stantly on the alert to discover flaws in the plan of grading and to rectify all mistakes made. The manly acknowledgment of a mistake on the part of an officer in the school will do much to inspire confidence on the part of the pupils in the purpose of the one who acknowledges the mistake. Little by little the plans may be perfected. Little by little the machinery of grading may be so regulated that it will go on with the minimum of friction and, therefore, with the maximum of good results.

Persistence.—Keep the school graded. Many schools have been graded for a short while and then have lapsed into slipshod methods, resulting in the undoing of much of the good accomplished. There should be an eternal vigilance exercised by the officials of the school to keep it on a high plane of grading. (See page 120, ff.)

IV

A GRADED SCHOOL

HAVING settled the preliminary questions as to the principles which should guide in the grading of the school, let us now consider the ideally graded school. It should consist of the following departments:

Cradle Roll.—Upon the Cradle Roll should be inscribed the names of all those children, who are and who ought to be identified with the Church, too young to attend Sunday school. Some of the first missionary efforts of the school are in connection with the work of getting candidates for the Cradle Roll. Upon it have been entered the names of children whose parents rarely thought of church or Sunday school until they were touched with the recognition of their little ones shown by Sunday-school workers. In the regularly organized Sunday school the Cradle Roll is as much a department as is the Primary or the Adult.

Beginners.—When the child is able to come to Sunday school he enters the Beginners Department, which is composed of little tots under six years of age. For this department especial provision is made wherever possible. It meets in a room by itself, with its own superintendent, who is assisted by as many helpers as the needs of the department require. For it the International Lesson Committee has issued a special series of lessons, outlined

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

with a view of giving instruction to the little ones on the plane of their intelligence and receptivity.

Primary.—From the Beginners Department the pupil is advanced into the Primary, which usually is composed of children from six to nine years of age. There is, perhaps, no department of the Sunday school to which more attention has been paid than to the Primary. The result of long years of labor on the part of Sunday-school leaders has been the betterment of the instruction given in the Primary Department, so that to-day this department in most schools holds the palm for excellent methods.

Advanced Primary.—In some large schools, where the material is abundant and the architectural facilities admit of it, the children are promoted at about eight years of age from the Primary to the Advanced Primary, in which they remain until they are ten. In more than one school where this grading has taken place it has relieved the difficulty that so often arises of interesting the older pupils of the Primary Department, and at the same time giving the younger ones their due portion of instruction.

Junior.—This is the department that at the present time is receiving most attention, for it is clearly recognized that the pupils from nine or ten to twelve years of age, of which this department ought to be composed, are passing through a period of development when much may be done with them and during which they ought to be prepared for the trying times of adolescence. Where there is no Advanced Primary, the pupils are transferred from the Primary into the Junior Department at nine

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

years of age and remain there until they are twelve. Where there is an Advanced Primary, the pupils are transferred therefrom into the Junior Department at ten years of age.

Intermediate.—The departments mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs are ordinarily grouped as the Elementary Division of the Sunday school; the Intermediate Department is commonly known as the main school. According to proper methods of classification, this department should consist of pupils from thirteen to sixteen years of age. Where possible, subdivisions according to attainments and capabilities should be made, for the intermediate or early adolescent period is a very critical one, during which the young people are very apt to withdraw from the Sunday school because they think it rather a small affair for such great personages as they are. At the same time it must be remembered that the “gang instinct” is very strong at this period; where it exists in a class it must be very carefully considered before any attempt is made to transfer members from or into that class. The prevalence of this instinct at this particular time necessitates those exceptions which must be made in applying all principles. Recently a class of boys refused to admit a stranger into their number because he did not belong to their “bunch,” as they expressed it.

Senior.—The Senior Department should consist of young people from seventeen to twenty years of age. This covers the periods of middle and later adolescence. It has been found that this department flourishes best where the classes are organized, and the members assume

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

the responsibility of recruiting and maintenance. Hence, wherever possible, every senior class should have a room by itself and should have its own officers as well as teacher.

According to the grading of the International Sunday School Association the Intermediate Department and the Senior Department together form the Secondary Division of the Sunday school.

Adult.—This department includes those over twenty years of age. Marvelous progress is now being made in the organization and development of this department, especially in connection with Organized Adult Bible Classes. There is no age for graduation, for the theory is that a person ought to begin attending Sunday school as soon as he is able to come to the Beginners Class and should remain a member thereof until unable to attend its sessions.

Home.—No school is complete without its Home Department, for there are in every community persons of all ages who, because of infirmity, illness, occupation, etc., are kept from attending the sessions of the school. These should be enrolled as members of the Home Department, which should be considered just as truly a department of the school as the Primary or Intermediate, and the members of which should have a right to all the privileges enjoyed by other members of the school. There should be regular transfers from the Home Department to other departments of the school and from these departments to the Home Department.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

Teacher Training.—In every Sunday school, as a part of the Senior Department or as a separate department, there should be a class or classes in which is given definite instruction for the purpose of training pupils to become teachers. The ideal teacher-training class is composed of young people from seventeen to twenty-one years of age. There may be as many teacher-training classes as the size of the school affords.

For the Small School.—It is realized that in small schools the minute divisions suggested cannot obtain for lack of material. The small school, however, can have at least three grades:

1. *Elementary.*—This should be composed of children under thirteen years of age, and, if possible, should be divided into classes along the age divisions suggested.

2. *Secondary.*—This should be composed of pupils between the ages of thirteen and twenty, and should, whenever possible, be divided into classes according to age and sex.

3. *Adult.*—Into this department should be put all over twenty, and, if possible, it should be organized as one large class.

The International Sunday School Association has adopted the following scheme of grading:

ELEMENTARY DIVISION	{	CRADLE ROLL
		All under 3 years of age.
		BEGINNERS DEPARTMENT
		3, 4 and 5 years old.
		PRIMARY DEPARTMENT
		6, 7 and 8 years old.
		JUNIOR DEPARTMENT
		9, 10, 11 and 12 years old.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

SECONDARY DIVISION	{	INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT
		13, 14, 15 and 16 years old.
ADULT DIVISION	{	SENIOR DEPARTMENT
		17, 18, 19 and 20 years old.
		ADULT DEPARTMENT
	{	All over 20 years old. This department includes the Adult Organized Bible Classes.
		HOME DEPARTMENT
	{	Including all above Cradle Roll age who, for any reason, cannot attend Sunday school.

The teacher-training class or classes may belong to either the Secondary Division or the Adult Division, according to the ages of the students.

Many schools now have a Sunday-school missionary organization, whose chief aim is to secure graded missionary instruction in the Sunday school. Some schools have a temperance organization, whose duties include the securing of graded temperance instruction in the Sunday school and the advancing of the cause of temperance.

V

GRADED TEACHERS

DURING the past twenty years much attention has been paid to the characteristics of those who form the membership of our Sunday schools. The results of this study have led to the adoption of certain principles in the assigning of teachers to the various grades. Further study and a better understanding of human nature may require changes as the days go by. For the present, at least, the following suggestions may be made concerning the teachers for the various departments:

Beginners.—The leader of this department is generally a woman. She ought to be active in body, with vivid imagination and fertility of resources in dealing with little ones. There are two things that she should love in addition to her Saviour, namely, children and music. Unless the teacher of the little folks has a real love for them, her work will be superficial. Her love for music will be a great help.

Primary.—The teacher of this grade should be much like the one described in the foregoing paragraph. The question has often been debated as to whether the leader of this department should be male or female. Ordinarily it is the latter, but the writer has known of cases where great success has followed the efforts of a man in his endeavors to lead and instruct the children

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

of the Primary Department. Again, the question of age has been discussed. One of the youngest teachers the writer ever encountered was a lady sixty-five years old, but she was so young in spirit that she could sympathize and keep in touch with her pupils. The point to be remembered is that the successful worker in the Primary Department must view things not from the plane of the adult, but along the lines of the everyday life of the pupils.

Junior.—Here, again, the leader of the department is usually a woman, but sometimes a man. This one needs also the characteristics of the teacher of Beginners or Primaries with a few added. Her pupils are growing. She should know not only what they now are but also what they are soon to be. Her work is twofold: first, instructing her pupils and training them so that they will show the results of her instruction in everyday life where they now are; second, preparing them for the storm and stress of the adolescent period into which they are soon to enter. Here, more than anywhere else, should there be breadth of study of the characteristics of the pupils. Hence, the leader of the Junior Department needs to know much of child nature and the nature of the young adolescent.

Intermediate.—Everything considered, the highest good will be conserved and the best ends attained by separating the sexes in the Intermediate Department. The boys twelve to sixteen should be in classes by themselves; the girls in their own classes. Ordinarily, the teacher should be of the same sex as the pupils. The

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

boys should have a young man teacher; the girls, a young woman teacher. The word "young" is used relatively. The meaning is: the teacher should be young in heart and in methods, able to appreciate the condition of the pupils as they now are. There are many reasons, physical as well as psychological, why a boy of thirteen ought to be under the direction of a manly man, and why his sister of fifteen should be blessed with the mothering of a womanly woman.

Senior.—The sex of the teacher is not so important after the pupils have passed through the early adolescent period. The writer prefers a male teacher for young men and a female teacher for young women. There are, however, many cases where young women do excellent work with young men classes and vice versa. The main point to be borne in mind is: In this period of their development the pupils are going through questionings and doubtings. They need then, most of all, a teacher who is deeply spiritual on the one hand and highly intellectual on the other; one who will sympathize with them in their questionings and doubts, and instead of dogmatically insisting that they accept certain truths, will be with them a fellow student in the endeavor to reach those conclusions which will satisfy the doubting heart that still wants to believe. The very worst teacher for these young people is some old saint, who has settled to his own satisfaction all theological and dogmatic questions and is impatient with those who cannot accept his conclusions.

Adult.—The members of the Adult Bible Class have, for the most part, passed through their period of doubt

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

and are now face to face with the realities of life. They need, most of all, teaching from which they can get inspiration and comfort for their everyday living. Their teacher, therefore, should be a person—whether male or female is of little account—who will bring the truths of the Bible to bear upon their daily perplexities and problems. One of the most remarkable facts connected with the Bible is that it is the book for to-day. He or she will be a successful teacher of adults who is able to get from it those things which are needed in our rushing life of the present time.

Teacher-training Students.—Many schools fail to have a teacher-training class because, as their officers claim, it is impossible to find a teacher therefor. Perhaps the mistake has been made of supposing that the teacher of this class must be an expert in normal methods, well versed in psychology, pedagogy and Biblical learning. The very first requisite for the leader of this class is an appreciation of the value of the work to be done. The second is a willingness to keep a little ahead of the members of the class. One who is too learned will discourage the pupils of an average class. One who is willing to be a fellow student with them may render excellent service.

Promotions.—Shall teachers be promoted with their pupils in a graded school? This question requires careful consideration and cannot be answered lightly. A teacher who remains in a given department, say the Junior, by degrees masters the difficulties connected with the work of that department and comes to know thoroughly the characteristics of the pupils thereof. Hence, it is much

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

better for this teacher to remain in this department than to go forward with the pupils, who are changing all the time. What is true of the Junior is true also of other departments. Hence, the principle is: Teachers should be promoted within departments, but not from one department to another. Occasionally there may be an exception to this rule.

VI

SPECIALIZED WORK

THERE are two evils connected with many Sunday schools that must be very seriously considered and earnestly combated. In the first place, a few workers have too many things put upon them. If a person is at all willing to work in the Sunday school, the tendency is so to load up that one with a variety of duties that he or she is overburdened so that nothing is well done. The remedy for this evil is to give individuals especial duties to perform, and, by refraining from imposing upon them other work, let them become experts in their particular line. The other evil is the craze for numbers. It would seem that much of our Sunday-school work is tested by the numbers on the roll. In some places a step in advance is taken and the numbers in actual attendance are taken as the criterion of success. This is all wrong. Better have a school of fifty members doing good work than one of a hundred carried on according to slipshod methods; if the school of one thousand is simply a mob, better get it down to five hundred and have a working school. In order to remedy both these evils workers must be selected for their especial qualifications for certain lines of duty, and they must seriously consider the problem of the betterment of the school irrespective of the numbers therein.

The Correlator.—The time is coming when the well-graded school, be it large or small, will have one person whose principal business will be to correlate the work

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

of the various departments of the school and even of the various individuals therein. This person need not necessarily be the superintendent, who, in a fair-sized or large-sized school, has ordinarily so many details to look after that the work of correlation should be given to one who makes an especial study of how it should be done. This one, however, should not work independently of, but as an assistant to, the superintendent. He should occupy such a vantage ground that he understands the working of the school as a whole from top to bottom. This understanding can be gained only by a study of the separate departments of the school as they are actually in operation, and by careful planning as to how these departments should be correlated one to another. At first, the correlator will necessarily make some mistakes, but as he gives time, thought and prayer to his particular work, he will become more and more expert and know better what ought to be done.

Superintendent of Admissions and Transfers.—Working in close harmony with, and under the direction of, the superintendent and the correlator should be a person whose especial business is to make all admissions to the school, place all newcomers in classes, and, at the designated time, make all transfers and promotions. The mere mention of the duties of such a person would raise a storm of indignation in many schools, for the practice quite generally prevails of anybody's and everybody's admitting candidates to the school, not according to any fixed principles, but to suit the wishes of the parties concerned. This is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to grade a school and much more difficult to keep it graded.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

When a person applies for admission to the school, that one should be brought to the superintendent of admission, who will, so far as possible, conform to the wishes of the applicant as to the class to which he is to be assigned, but who will also make no assignment that will be contrary to the principles of grading adopted for the school.

Secretaries.—The number of secretaries in a school will necessarily vary according to its size. There should be, however, one secretary whose duties are well defined. His business should be to make a careful record of the pupils in the school and to keep carefully the record of their attendance; especially should it be recorded how a person is transferred from department to department throughout the school. In other words, there should be a complete record of any given individual from the time he enters the school until he departs therefrom. This will be complete only when the cause of his departure is noted and also the place to which he goes. Such careful work on the part of some one in the school would do much to hold to the school the pupils who belong there, while it would help do away with the vicious system that prevails in many quarters of pupils' going from school to school to suit their own convenience. Of course, under this system a pupil who tries to be a member of two or three schools at the same time would have little success. The enrollment of a pupil's name in two classes of the school at the same time would be an impossibility; yet such things are frequent under the present system.

The Superintendent's Council.—To a select few of the officers of the school, who have the time and willingness to

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADED

consult with the superintendent, the correlator and the superintendent of admissions and transfers, should be delegated the work of planning for the conduct of the school. Nothing should be done without careful consideration by this Council. In any case where doubt exists as to the practicality of a method, it should be viewed from all standpoints before being adopted; after its adoption, it should be carefully watched in order to ascertain its effects. If found to be without value to the school, it should be changed.

Teachers' Meeting.—Before any plan is put into operation it should be considered by the teachers gathered in meeting, so that an enthusiastic coöperation may be secured on the part of at least a majority of the workers in the school. Once a plan is adopted, it should be carried out until it is found to be impracticable; then it should be changed.

Unhampered Work.—The duties of the various special workers in the school being clearly understood and recognized, they should be unhampered in their work. For example, no one, not even the pastor or the superintendent, should interfere with the work of the superintendent of admissions. If that person is making mistakes he should be reasoned with and his mistakes pointed out, but his work interfered with—never. When such a course of action is consistently carried out everyone will come to recognize it as a proper thing, and the complaints and loss of time, which are so common now on account of interference of one worker with another, will cease.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

V

THE GRADED LESSONS

BY

REV. E. MORRIS FERGUSSON

THE GRADED LESSONS

I

INTRODUCTORY

IN addition to the other things that a Sunday school is or may be made to be, it is a school. In its capacity as a school it must teach. In order that its teaching may be systematic, orderly and purposeful it must have lessons prepared and specified as a guide to its teaching.

The problem of lesson choosing has always been foremost among the many problems of Sunday-school work, though for the last forty years most of us have been content to have the International Lesson Committee take it off our hands by giving us the selections of the Uniform Lesson Series. It has always been a problem, nevertheless; and many conscientious workers have attacked it for their schools, either by working out lessons of their own or by investigating and possibly introducing the Blakeslee or some other non-International proposition. Since 1902 separate lessons for at least the Beginners Department have been available under International auspices. Since October, 1909, a completely graded International course of lessons has been, in regular progression, provided for the use of all Sunday schools; and there are other courses, at least two of which also furnish one course each for every possible grade of the Sunday school, with various elective courses for adult classes. Grading and graded lessons

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

are in the air. The problem of lesson choosing is upon us, whether we will or no.

These chapters are for the Sunday-school leader who, having fairly faced this great problem, has resolved, with more or less of coöperation and support from his fellow workers, to introduce the new International Graded Sunday-school Lessons as they have been published by the Sunday-school board of his church; or who, having previously so resolved, is now wrestling with the many practical difficulties involved in the successful installation of the system. This Sunday school, being a "Sunday school at work," is working on the lesson problem with zeal at least equal to that which it bestows on the various other lines of effort set forth in this book. It accepts the principle of lesson adaptation to pupils' needs, and is trying or about to try the International Graded Lessons as the printed machinery for securing such adaptation.

Throughout these chapters it is assumed that the reader has already procured for himself the prospectus and sample pages of the graded lessons, with the lesson outlines and explanatory pamphlets accompanying them, all of which the publishers will send free to every inquirer; that he has, in addition, secured one or more sample sets of teachers' and pupils' textbooks, first part, of the departments he is especially interested in, and that he has given these documents serious and sympathetic study, with special reference to the aims of the course, the ways by which these aims are sought and the reasons for following these ways rather than those hitherto relied on.

II

MISCONCEPTIONS

It may be that the hesitation of a school to take hold of these graded lessons as soon as they were put on the market has resulted from some misconception as to their character and working, or as to the kind of Sunday schools for which they are adapted. The section on "The Sunday School Graded," by Dr. McKinney, has already answered some of these. Let us, in addition to what is there said, observe just what a graded Sunday school is, and then take up some of these possible misconceptions for reply

Why Grades?—A graded Sunday school is a Sunday school in which the work is arranged in a series of grades or steps. It is the work of the school that is graded: the pupils are graded in order that they may receive this work; the teachers, in order that they may do it; the lessons, in order that they may outline and guide it. Any Sunday school is a graded Sunday school that does graded work. The old-fashioned "main room" of the Sunday school did continuous work, and the lessons were the same for all. Grading is putting in the steps.

A grade, therefore, in Sunday-school work is one unit of work of the school with reference to certain pupils. The standard unit for day schools, and the most convenient also for the Sunday school, is one year. The child's own

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

consciousness has so much to do with the success of all school work that we must think in terms of his experience in this as in all Sunday-school matters. Four years is, indeed, a long span of life, but birthdays come each year. The day-school and the Sunday-school life commingle in his thoughts. The Sunday-school work should run by the year, as his life does; and the year should begin in the fall, as his day-school year does. The International graded lessons, accordingly, are graded by years; and each year begins on the first Sunday in October and contains fifty-two numbered lessons, ending with Lesson 52 on the last Sunday in September.

The Aim of a Graded School.—The aim of a graded Sunday school is to lead every pupil, in each year of his life, through that course of instruction and self-expression which will best fit the needs of his soul for that year. We cannot predict that a particular child will develop certain specific needs and no others in one certain year, but we do know enough to-day of the soul-needs of childhood to be able to set certain specific needs opposite certain years of life, and to predict that a lesson course framed to meet those needs will, when properly taught to children of that age, feed their souls with fit instruction and awaken in them a spontaneous, happy response, through which their character will be formed and grow. The graded school's aim is to deal in that way with every one of its pupils; so that each one, as he attends its sessions week by week and lives through year after year of his developing life, will receive the instruction that he needs in each of his years, and will become, through wisely guided forms of expressional activity, that which he ought to be.

THE GRADED LESSONS

In the light of this ideal of Sunday-school grading we see at once that it is a mistake to conceive of grading as something appertaining only to large schools. If grading is a matter of the work of the Sunday school with each pupil, then a little Sunday school needs to have its work graded no less than does a large school; though it will no doubt go about the work of grading in a different way. The best is surely none too good for its children. In the little Sunday school we deal with the individual pupil directly, and he passes from grade to grade alone. In the large Sunday school we are obliged to classify our individuals and to deal with them in class groups; and they are usually promoted in classes and not individually. The lessons, also, as we shall see, must be handled differently in a large school and in a small one. But grading is just as indispensable to good work in the school of four or five classes as in that of fifty.

The need for separate rooms, especially for the lower departments, has sometimes loomed up as a barrier to the grading of the school and the introduction of the graded lessons. Now separate rooms are surely desirable; and inasmuch as they are being furnished to more and more schools each year, the elementary graded lesson publications do very properly provide for department exercises to be conducted by the department superintendent in a separate department room. But the lessons furnished to the class teachers do not depend on a separate room. Thousands of junior, primary and even beginners' teachers are using the graded lessons in the main room, with not even a curtain or a screen to divide one class from the next.

III

DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS

"WE have no teachers qualified to handle these more educational lessons," objects some superintendent. Along with this a kindred difficulty is frequently anticipated: "Where are we to get substitute teachers, if each teacher is henceforth to teach a different lesson?"

Supervisory Workers.—There is a real difficulty here; but it needs to be differently stated in order to be studied in the light of the facts. When we take up the graded lessons we indicate our desire to raise the educational standard of our Sunday school by introducing an improved method of lesson teaching. Our former standard was so low that it made no noticeable difference in our output when we picked up a hasty substitute who had read over the Bible lesson and introduced him to the class. With the new graded lesson system it is true that easy and inefficient plans will not work, because we have raised the standard, and our classes now expect good teaching on a prepared lesson every week. Preparation, even of the uniform lesson, involves a study of the particular class to be taught, as well as of the lesson material. If we cannot have teachers present each Sunday, we must now organize a small force of supervisory workers, familiar with the lesson courses of their respective departments, who can on occasion take vacant classes and in a few minutes' glance at the textbook prepare themselves to

THE GRADED LESSONS

carry on the work for the day without a break. The necessity for a system of trained substitutes is not made by the graded lessons, but only revealed.

As for the qualified teachers, the same thing may be said. We always needed them. But it is a mistake to suppose that because these lessons are educationally good, therefore those who teach them must be educationally good in proportion. Which road calls for the better driver,—a mountain byroad or a modern macadam highway? One need not be an expert road-maker in order to drive over an expertly made road. The graded lessons are the Sunday school's educational road: what we need in the teachers is simply the same old faithfulness plus a willingness to learn the new ways involved in the new lessons. Once broken in, the same teachers will do far better work with the graded lessons, because the tasks involved are so much simpler and the response of the class to anything like good teaching is so much more spontaneous and inspiring.

Superintendents' Difficulties.—Around the uniform lesson have grown up certain institutions and customs, some of which seem to many a superintendent to be well-nigh indispensable to the orderly conduct of the Sunday-school session. The reading of the lesson responsively is one such: how can you open school without doing that? How can hymns be chosen and prayers offered with no lesson for the day to fix the common thought of the school? Bring in a medley of independent lessons, and where is that unity of impression that makes a good Sunday-school session mean so much, even to the thoughtless pupil in the inefficient teacher's class? The

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

superintendent's desk review has been abused by some; and perhaps it is well that that should go. Yet it has often been a word of power. Surely the superintendent should have a chance to say something to his school: whence now is his message to come?

Elsewhere also will the loss of a common lesson be felt. Not one in ten of the Sunday schools using the uniform lessons maintains now a weekly teachers' meeting for the study and preparation of next Sunday's lesson; but the ideal of such a meeting seems a precious thing to lose, even if we have not its reality. The lesson daily readings, also, are in some Christian homes used as the guide in family worship; and here and there parents are found who go over the lesson with their children before Sunday school. All this the graded lessons make impossible, do they not? Should not the home and its interests be considered before the Sunday school? Something, also, must be said for the value of the newspaper treatments of the uniform lesson, if only as a mark of recognition and a bond of Christian unity; and the large publishing interests of our denominations, seriously jeopardized as they are by this new, expensive, complicated and quite problematical system, must be duly considered.

The Hidden Treasure.—Yes, we should consider all these things. To count the cost before making the venture is a duty which our Lord himself enjoined. But he also spoke a parable of one who sold his house and his goods and all that he had, and doubtless for a time was deemed by his wife and family a brute and by his neighbors a madman, because he was determined to own a certain field. The man knew what he was after, and so do

THE GRADED LESSONS

we. There is a treasure hid in these graded lessons, for which all that has been enumerated would be a bargain price indeed to pay. But not all this must be paid. When the inevitable time of confusion, strangeness and readjustment is over we shall find some of these good things still with us in improved form, and the rest replaced by new values far better than the old. Have faith to go forward. The lions at the top of the Hill Difficulty roar loudly, and Timorous and Mistrust come scampering breathless down. Let the true pilgrims boldly climb the hill; and when they come to pass the lions they shall find them safely chained.

IV

INTRODUCING THE ELEMENTARY LESSONS

Books or Lessons?—The printed textbook pages are not the lesson; the lesson is what takes place when an average teacher, under reasonably favorable circumstances, comes to Sunday school and uses these pages in teaching his class, and when his pupils in like manner use their pupils' helps and their Bibles in this week's work on the lesson. It follows that we do not introduce the lessons by merely introducing the books. To order a full set of graded lesson textbooks, hand them out as we have been wont to hand out the uniform lesson quarterlies and announce that next Sunday we shall start using the new graded lessons,—that is to court all kinds of trouble and failure. These lessons ought not to be touched by any Sunday school that is not willing to go about the work of introducing the lessons in an intelligent way. Nor should any worker lightly say, "We introduced the graded lessons and they were a failure." He probably did not introduce the lessons at all, but only the books; and though there was no doubt a failure somewhere in his enterprise, it may have been something else than the books that failed. Mowing machines and fireless cookers have been known to fail in that same way.

These are educational lessons. Introducing them is part of the work of putting the Sunday school on an educational basis. It is, therefore, an educational task and needs the services of some one who understands educa-

THE GRADED LESSONS

tional matters. A Christian school-teacher or principal, or a pastor trained at the seminary in religious pedagogy, might well be called in as expert adviser to assist in this task, unless the superintendent himself is a trained educational man. A permanent director of instruction, as we shall see, is needed in the work of a graded Sunday school; and if such an officer can be secured at the start, so much the better. If not, let the superintendent at least understand that this is no easy task, and that he must not depend on his experience with the uniform lessons.

The Logical Beginning.—The logical place to start graded work is always with the younger children. If the school has a Primary Department or class, but no beginners class, take up with the primary teacher the matter of introducing the graded primary lessons in her department. If she has but one large primary class, the school being small, let her begin with the first-year primary lessons, teaching the lesson to all her pupils together. Let her begin with the proper lesson for the Sunday when she intends to start,—Lesson 14 for the first Sunday in January, Lesson 27 for the first Sunday in April, Lesson 40 for the first Sunday in July, Lesson 1 for the first Sunday in October, or whatever may be her opening Sunday's number in the graded lesson year. To start with Lesson 1 on the first of January would give the children their Christmas lesson at Easter time and their Thanksgiving lesson at Washington's Birthday. Do not worry as to the lessons these children will thus fail to get. Forget the things that are behind: get into step at once and march with the procession. Follow this as a principle throughout all the work of introducing the lessons.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

In providing the primary teacher with her materials see that she has that one of the four parts of the Teacher's Manual for the first primary year which covers the lessons she is to start with, and the previous parts of that year. If she is to begin with Lesson 27 on the first of April, she will need Parts I, II and III; then Part IV will be needed in June. The first part of the teacher's helper in each course, for all departments, contains the general Foreword or introduction, and Part II usually carries the list of lessons for the year. Sample sets of the pupils' folders for each of these parts are also needed. The Teacher's Manual is permanent material and will be used again. If others assist in the Primary Department, all should be similarly supplied.

All these supplies for the teachers should be in their hands at least one month before the teaching of the lessons is to begin. The primary teacher and her helpers need to study with care not merely the first lesson or two, but the work of the whole year. The Foreword is a little teacher-training textbook in itself, and several weeks of a busy woman's time is none too much to allow for a careful mastery of its ideas and comprehension of the purpose and aim of the lessons and the reasons for their various details. Two months, indeed, would be better. This also applies to every course.

In such a small Sunday school as we have supposed, the primary teacher, beginning thus at some point in the first year of the three years of primary graded lessons, will go on to the second year and then to the third, and will finish the course on the last Sunday of September, three years or less from the time when she began. The next Sunday she will begin with Lesson 1 of the first year and

THE GRADED LESSONS

teach the same three years' lessons over again, using the same Teacher's Manual, but, of course, furnishing new folders to the pupils. These three years of primary teaching are thus her own regular lesson course; and every time she and her workers go over the ground they will find new ways of making the lessons a success.

The primary pupils, ranging, we may suppose, from three years in age to nine, will receive each week a "primary folder,"—a four-page lesson paper carrying a picture, a story, a Bible verse, a verse or two of rhyme and an outline picture or motto to be colored. These folders take the place of any picture cards and children's papers that the school may have hitherto furnished to these children. The story on them is the lesson story which the teacher tells for the day. They are not intended for use previous to the lesson and must on no account be given out before the close of the hour. Learning the Sunday-school lesson, for these little children, should consist in taking home the pretty folder, telling mother what teacher said, reading over or letting mother read aloud the lesson story, learning the verses and with colored crayons finishing the picture or motto. The parent's help is needed as much as ever, but it should come after, not before, the teacher's work.

Grading the Primary Department.—If the school is one of a hundred members or more, there will be primary children enough to separate into grades. The basis of separation at the start should be first age, then size and then capacity. In nine cases out of ten, for these years, age-grading will be right; but certain children may need to be otherwise handled on account of their physical

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

growth or their mental capacities. On this latter point the public-school grading is a convenient guide. One advantage of having a director of instruction, elected and publicly recognized as such, is that he or she can, when necessary, take hold of this matter in an educational way and settle it without fear or favor. Usually, however, the primary teacher, knowing her own children, can grade them herself after the plan of grading has been agreed upon.

With the primary children arranged in classes, the erstwhile primary teacher becomes the primary superintendent and should be so called. Four divisions should be made, either all at once or class by class, as teachers can be found. There is no need whatever, at this age, of separating boys and girls. One group will contain all the children who have passed their sixth, but not their seventh birthday; another those who are seven, but not yet eight; another those not yet nine. Pupils nine or over are properly juniors, and belong in the next higher class. The pupils below six are the beginners; we treat them as a fourth class in the Primary Department because in so many Sunday schools that is where they now are. In truth, they should form a department of their own, as we shall see. But at least they should have a separate teacher and a corner curtained off for their use.

With three or more graded classes in the Primary Department the primary graded lessons can, if desired, be at once installed as they were meant to be used, each grade teaching its own lesson. This calls for a separate primary room with a department program, though there are ways of making shift without either. The primary superintendent now conducts the program, which is full of important

THE GRADED LESSONS

instruction not connected with the lessons, but supplemental thereto. The whole of her hour, opening and closing and all between, should be in her own room. A portion of the time is spent in class teaching and activity, including the teaching of the graded lessons by the class teachers. For the first year or part of a year the primary superintendent may teach the first-year lessons to the whole department, but as soon as possible the teachers should take charge of the lesson work, each teaching the lesson for her grade.

Beginners and Juniors.—These classes or grades being provided for, it is time to take care of the beginners. The beginners' teacher is in charge of a work represented in the day-school system by the kindergarten; and we realize to-day that this work with the four- and five-year-old children is the foundation work of the whole Sunday school, and well deserves the best room, equipment and teaching force we know how to give it. So we secure the brightest and best-equipped teacher we can find, give her an entirely separate room if we can—a room, light, spacious and on the street floor, with a piano—and place in her hands the beginners graded lessons. The beginners course is two years long, but it is usual to teach one lesson to the whole department, even where there are two or more circles whose teachers could teach different lessons if that were desirable. To keep all together for the two-years' course, promoting some each year or half-year, and regularly repeating the course, is declared by our elementary leaders to be the wisest plan. In a small school, of course, it is the only plan.

The junior lessons come next. It is possible to start

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

these and the higher courses on the first of January, April or July, but it is a much simpler task to introduce them at the beginning of the graded year. The school needs, of course, a graded organization of classes in order to handle the graded lessons; so our first task will be to lay out the plan of a graded Junior Department if one is not already formed. April is none too early for this work, if we propose to start the lessons in October.

Here again our director of instruction has a work to do. This is the work: Make a list of all pupils, by classes, whose ages average, class by class, from nine to twelve. In a small school these children will be in one or a small group of classes, several grades in a class. In a school of one hundred and fifty members there will be six or seven such classes, nearly enough to assign one boys' class and one girls' class to each of the four grades. In a larger school there will be a group of classes for each grade. But in any one of these cases the graded roll of individual pupils will indicate to which of the four junior grades the pupil belongs, and how many years he has to spend in the department before he is promoted, on the Promotion Day following his twelfth birthday. All this can be done without any present rearrangement of classes or interruption of the weekly work.

In settling special cases, remember that we need flexibility, tact and common sense in Sunday-school work, as well as consistency and faithfulness. The pupils themselves can often help us if we will let them. Here and there the director will note pupils who should be transferred to some other class as soon as it can be done without undue friction. Such transfers should if possible be made during the year; if left till Promotion Sunday

THE GRADED LESSONS

the move will look like penalizing or demotion. Get the teacher of the class to which the transferees should go to get his pupils to invite them over. Arrange at the same time for the teacher from whom they should go to be ready to consent, with proper reluctance, when the invited pupils raise the subject and ask his advice. If the graded lessons can be introduced into a set of well-graded classes they will have a better chance.

The Junior Lessons.—A junior superintendent should now be chosen, and copies of the various junior textbooks placed in his or her hands for study and careful distribution to the junior teachers. The same principles govern here as have already been stated; that is, the books should be handed out in July or August or earlier, each teacher receiving the Teacher's Manual, Part I, and a sample of the pupil's book to go with it, for whichever of the four junior years he is to teach. Where there is but one junior class, it must, of course, follow one year only, and may start with the first. If the teachers have plenty of time to study their books and work out, as they should, all the tasks assigned to the pupil for the whole of the first part, and if the work is explained to them by a director who believes in the lessons and sees how they are related to the lesson aim, a good start can be made on all four grades abreast on the first Sunday in October.

Suppose this can all be done, what have we established? For the first nine years of Sunday-school life, from three to twelve, our Sunday school now offers a consecutive course of graded Bible and Christian teaching. Imagine a little group of children in two families of the church. There is a baby just born, another one year old, a toddler

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

of two, a three-year-old and a child of four. The last is in the Beginners Department; the others are coming on. As the school is now arranged, each one of these five children in turn will get the whole nine years of instruction and expressive activity; and if we have installed all the lessons abreast, then each child will not only get the whole course, but will get every year of it in its proper logical order during that year of his life for which the year's course was selected and written. Compare that with the educational hodge-podge that would be served to those children, with no two messes alike, if the classes through which they passed were all teaching the same lesson each Sunday on a six-year revolving plan.

V

INTRODUCING THE SECONDARY LESSONS

WITH a well-trained and self-reliant director of instruction, appointed and sustained by the church as well as by the Sunday school, or with a pastor or other worker who is an actual educational leader, though not so named, or without such a leader, but with a hearty spirit of progressiveness and desire for the best actuating the teachers, it might be safe to introduce the intermediate and senior graded lessons on the same October Sunday as that which sees the work of the juniors first put in operation. Under any other circumstances it is a risky thing to do.

Getting the Vision.—There are several reasons for this. The problem of the right religious teaching of the adolescent boys and girls is one which the church has never solved. The way these boys and girls both drop away from us in those years is clear enough proof of that, if we should in our dignity hesitate to confess it. The new courses are an honest and courageous attempt to solve this great problem. Those who worked them out were explorers and experimenters; and though they confidently believe that they are on the right track, yet as to the finish and detail of their printed apparatus they count not themselves to have attained. The Sunday school that, without a vision of the need for real spiritual leadership for these splendid but trying boys and girls, plunges

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

blindly forward merely because graded lessons are said to be the proper thing, will fare as badly as Pliable in the Slough of Despond. Go slow. Let the junior lessons run a year before you undertake intermediate problems.

Moreover, we want a few junior graduates to start business with. It was stated before that the logical place to start grading is in the lower departments. Why? Because children do not grow down; they grow up. Every one of the graded lesson courses was planned with the assumption that the pupils have been over the courses preceding. While the lessons are being introduced, of course, this is not true; but that is merely the transition stage. Every year of graded life brings us nearer to the time when every junior will have had all the primary lessons and every intermediate all the junior lessons. Much of the interest of the intermediate lessons depends on the pupils' familiarity with the narratives of the Bible. From these narratives, which constitute the junior lessons, they are now to take the biographical elements and reconstruct Abraham, Moses, Joshua and other characters as living personalities, men worth knowing. One reason why some Sunday schools have had a hard time with these lessons is that the pupils, having had only the fragmentary and irregular studies of the uniform lessons, knew so little about the men chosen that the labor of learning the facts took the interest out of the work. Later classes will do better, for they will come to these lessons prepared to handle and enjoy them. By waiting a year we make a start in this direction. Nevertheless, if the teachers are ready to start at once, do not hold them back; for the need is great. These considerations do not apply with the

THE GRADED LESSONS

same force to the senior lessons, at least as to the first year; though there, too, caution is desirable.

Study the Aim.—In giving out the intermediate and senior books for the teachers to study prior to beginning their work, call their special attention to the aims of the courses, and remind them that these lessons, like all in the series, are cultural rather than informational in character. The aim of each lesson in the first year intermediate is to help the boys or girls to know David or Haggai as a man, and to feel the power, whatever it may have been, of his personality by studying who he was, what he did and what he stood for. Now the moment we succeed in doing this, we have taught the lesson, whether we get over all the lesson material or not. Teaching one of these lessons is something like starting an automobile. When the engine starts the cranking is over; after that the task is to guide the machine. After the boys are well interested in David and are themselves at work gathering and arranging the Bible information about him, the teacher's task is to lead them into forms of expression, not to impress on them more information or exhort them to the imitating of David's virtues and the avoidance of his sins. Many of these lessons have failed for lack of thus following the aim. Many workers have judged them too hard because there is so much in them to learn. If so, leave out the surplus, taking just enough to enable you to make the lesson do its appointed service for your pupils' souls.

Impress on the teachers, also, the need of a careful study of the Foreword and other suggestions in the teachers' helps. This work is on a very different plan from anything the ordinary Sunday-school teacher has ever done

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

before. The first impulse, especially of an older teacher, will be to criticize and reject the lessons or some of their features. Be patient. Nobody can be a good teacher who is not willing to be taught himself. Study these lessons until you catch the ideal, the vision, that lies behind them. After that you may improve on them and adapt them by changes to your pupils' needs as much as you like; but first do them justice.

VI

SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

GRADED lessons, of course, require a graded Sunday school; and no Sunday school, however well graded to-day, will stay graded unless we make provision for an annual readjustment of the fixed graded structure to the growing lives of the children. This readjustment is effected through the holding of an annual Promotion Day. As the lesson courses start with the first Sunday of October, the last Sunday of September is the most convenient time for this. The popular exercises of Rally Day can easily be merged into this more purposeful educational observance.

Promotion.—All honor should be lent to the day. The director of instruction is the real officer of the day, though the superintendent conducts the program. Each pupil outside the adult classes goes up one grade, except in a few individual cases where demotion is obviously called for. Honor is given to those whose finished graded work merits honor, but the others go up just the same; they had their chance, and we need their places for those coming on. In large Sunday schools the promotions are by classes, the teachers being assigned to new classes of younger age in the same department. In smaller schools the classes are fixed and individual pupils of graduating age are promoted, while others join the class from below.

The senior promotions to the adult classes first take

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

place; and the new grading of the undergraduate seniors is read from the graded roll, with honors as merited. Then the fourth year intermediates are promoted to the senior department, and their new department roll is read in like manner. In each case the department graduates rise and march to their new places, while the others shift seats as the roll of their grade is called. The elementary graduations,—junior to intermediate, primary to junior, beginners to primary and “cradle-rollers” to beginners,—can be made a beautiful and touching ceremony, suggestions for which may be found in the elementary graded manuals. Be careful, however, to deal with the older pupils in quieter and more grown-up fashion, and avoid asking the older boys to make themselves individually conspicuous. Diplomas may be given to the department graduates.

The Director of Instruction.—A clearer idea of the need for a personal director of instruction may be seen if we enumerate some of the things which such an officer may properly do. In a well-organized school, however, much of the director's work will be syndicated in the hands of department superintendents and helpers; and a good director will labor to that end. These are some of his responsibilities: to prepare the orders for graded lesson books and material; to assist teachers in lesson planning; to give special attention to backward pupils and classes falling behind; to act as temporary substitute teacher; to hear memory work; to inspect pupils' work and award honors; to keep the graded roll; to suggest new books for the library bearing on the lessons; to prepare the school for Promotion Sunday.

THE GRADED LESSONS

The graded roll is simply a list of all the pupils, beginning with the beginners, arranged by classes and departments as far as possible, with blanks for new names to come in during the year. Opposite each name is the pupil's grade for the year, P 1, I 2, etc., indicating primary first grade, intermediate second grade, etc.; also his birthday and the class in which he is this year enrolled. A column should be left for remarks. A small blank book can easily be ruled for this purpose. Addresses and records of attendance are for the class books and the secretary's record. Group each grade separately.

Working Together.—A stated monthly meeting of the officers and teachers of all departments should be held on a week night, for the study and discussion of the many problems of the Sunday school. The presidents of the organized adult classes should be made members of this body. "Sunday-school board" is the customary designation in Methodist usage, and a very good name. "Workers' conference" is the designation in the new joint standard. If the superintendent is wise, he will see that the pastor is made chairman or moderator, with the understanding that he presides over, but does not run, the meeting; that being done by the superintendent as floor leader under parliamentary rules. The hour of adjournment must be as definite as that of calling to order. If business is dispatched in forty-five minutes, the next thirty can be spent in department caucuses in which the lesson problems can be studied in detail. Much graded-lesson friction can be lubricated with a workers' conference regularly held.

The teachers and leaders in each department need the help of contact with their fellow teachers of like depart-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

ments in other Sunday schools. Whatever facilities for this exist in city, county, state and denominational connection should be used to the full. No Sunday school can afford to work on the vast problems of graded instruction alone. The graded union or city institute should be loyally attended; and every year should see one or more of the key workers sent at the school's expense to the nearest school of methods for a week of instruction and uplift. The schools that have done this in the past are to-day having little trouble with the graded lessons.

As the superintendent reviews this plan of work, he may be pardoned for asking in a dazed sort of way, "Where do I come in?" What is there left for him to do? More than ever. With the uniform lessons now merely one of several courses being followed in the main room, they can no longer be the unifying factor for the day. Now the way is open to give each Sunday its own lesson. The superintendent's course is the calendar. A service book for the superintendent, with a platform suggestion for every Sunday in the year, is now being planned by at least one denominational house;¹ but a superintendent with ideas could easily make his own. Make the closing service brief and devotional. Let the theme of the day guide the selections of the opening service, and close that service with a Bible hymn, a showing of Bibles and a prayer for God's blessing on the lessons to be studied in the classes.

Festival Days.—The festivals of the Sunday school should be put into educational relationship with the work

¹ "The Westminster Sunday-school Superintendents' Service Book." Planned for annual publication by the Westminster Press.

THE GRADED LESSONS

of the year. Besides the fun-night at Christmas, or in connection with it, a public exhibition should be given of some of the good work our departments have done during the fall quarter. Another such may be given at Children's Day; perhaps one a quarter. Properly worked up to and wisely and brightly handled, fully as much popular interest can be evoked with a picturesque Bible dialogue or drama, a sand map demonstration of the journeys of Jesus, a primary recitation of texts and lesson poems, an intermediate debate on the relative merits of Joseph and Moses, or a brace of senior essays on the medical missionary and the trained nurse as factors in the progress of Christian civilization. If these graded courses have been dragging a little, a tonic of this sort may set them on their feet again.

The End of the Work.—The end of all our graded lesson work is salvation. Salvation includes conversion; but it neither begins nor ends there. The tiny beginner needs the Lord Jesus Christ, and the honest but blundering and sinning young follower of Jesus needs him too. We want maximum, not minimum Christians, heroes and heroines of faith and service, the seeds of a generation that shall take the world for Christ. The one ruling purpose that underlies every year of the International Graded Lessons is to help the Sunday schools of North America to make that dream come true.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

VI

THE ADULT CLASS

BY

W. C. PEARCE AND OTHERS



THE ADULT CLASS

I

HOW TO ORGANIZE

Cultivate Atmosphere.—It is a mistake to organize any adult class before its members understand and heartily approve the new plan of work. One might as well plant garden seeds in frozen soil. The organized class is an ideal democracy, and therefore every participant should be both intelligent and sympathetic, if the largest success is to be achieved. Literature should be secured, and should be given to those who are to be invited to join the class. A careful and thorough study should be made of the plans and methods of the organized class. Much depends on the thoroughness of this study and the impression it makes.

Enlist Key Men and Women.—A knowledge of any community or congregation enables one to select easily the young men or young women whom others will follow. It is wise to approach such persons first, and seek to win others through them. Sometimes these leaders may be found already in the Sunday school. Often they are to be found outside. It is profitable to be patient and persistent in the enlistment of real leaders at the very beginning. A good start gives promise of victory.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Organize Existing Classes.—Nearly every Sunday school has one or more adult classes that are not organized. Invite the leaders of these classes to a conference and explain to them the value and purpose of class organization. Give them some concrete examples of classes that have received large benefits through organization. When the leaders have been interested, they will secure the coöperation of the entire class membership. Invite the members to meet by classes. If practicable, have speakers engaged who have had large experience in the work and will be able to impart enthusiasm to all who are present. Have on hand printed material with suggestions as to plans of organization and methods of work.

Enlist New Members.—A careful canvass of the entire neighborhood should be made. From this canvass carefully prepare a list of names of all those who should be interested in Bible study and who might be secured as members of an adult class. If there is more than one adult class in the school, divide this list of names into groups and assign one group to each class. Invite all whose names are included on the list to attend a conference, where the matter of organizing a class will be discussed. Present to them in an attractive way the advantages of organization for men and women. Sometimes, in this way, new classes may be started from entirely new material.

Division of Classes.—In some cases it has been found wise to begin by inviting a few men and a few women, who have been members of a mixed class or unorganized classes, to meet at some convenient time, and with their coöperation start two classes, one for men and the other for women.

THE ADULT CLASS

It has been found that numbers of men and women are not usually as easily reached in a mixed class as in separate classes. It is not urged that mixed classes be discontinued, but it has been found wise to build up in every Sunday school a men's class and a women's class. This can be done without embarrassing or hindering in any way the work of any existing mixed class.

Charter Membership Plan.—This plan provides four definite steps in the organization of an adult class: (1) The holding of an organization conference with those who have been chosen as leaders, and those whom they may invite. At such a conference a careful review may be made of the plans proposed. (2) The preparation of a prospective membership list. This list should include the names of those whom the leaders think should be, and possibly could be, won to the class about to be organized. The placing of a name on this list should be equivalent to a covenant on the part of all participating that they will use every legitimate means to win that one to the class. In making this list it should be kept in mind that we are commanded to "go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in." (3) The appointment of a time and place for permanent organization. It is unwise to fix this time too near the date of the preliminary organization conference; neither is it well to appoint a time too far removed. From four to six weeks after the date of the organization conference is suggested. A week night should be chosen, and the best place is the church, where the class will meet regularly. (4) The conducting of an enthusiastic and systematic canvass for charter members. Everyone on the prospective membership list should be sought

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

definitely, and many others also. The date for forming the permanent organization should be announced frequently, and it should be made clear that only those who join the class before organization can become charter members. When this plan is followed, this form of application may be used:

I wish to become a member of an adult Bible class to be organized as may be agreed upon by the members, each member to have a voice in the conduct of the class; the class to be a part of the Sunday school and its objects to be Bible study, mutual helpfulness and an adequate Christian service for every member.

All applicants for charter membership will be duly notified as to the time and place of organization.

Name.....

Address

Signed at request of.....

When the date appointed for the completion of the class organization arrives, make much of the meeting. Be sure that a definite plan of organization is ready to present. Have in mind those who will make efficient officers, and provide for the appointment of such committees as are necessary to insure success. Many classes find it exceedingly helpful to close this campaign with a banquet; at this time permanent organization is effected.

The following standard of the International Sunday-

THE ADULT CLASS

school Association has been tested many times, and will give to any class a working organization:

1. The class shall be definitely connected with some Sunday school.

2. The class shall have the following officers: teacher, president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. It shall also have at least three standing committees, as follows: (1) Membership; (2) Devotional-Missionary; (3) Social. It is not required that these committees be known by these particular names, but that the class shall have three committees which are responsible for these three kinds of work.

3. The class shall consist of members who are twenty years of age or over.

Certificate of Recognition.—For the encouragement of classes which attain the foregoing standard of organization the International Sunday-school Association has prepared a beautifully lithographed certificate of recognition, to be given through the various state and provincial associations upon the receipt of an application blank properly filled out and the small fee required.

The advantages of enrollment and the securing of this certificate are varied. It helps to advertise the organized class idea to all visitors, and it aids in establishing a permanent and effective plan of class organization; it is an expression of loyalty to the Organized Adult Bible Class Movement; it is an indication that the class is willing to stand up and be counted as a part of the Adult Bible Class Movement; it will bring the class into a helpful fellowship with the other organized classes of its community and of North America. No class should think it can have the best success while working alone; it will give to the class an

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

opportunity to help others—when a class has been very successful its testimony should be given everywhere; it is a tremendous stimulus to world-wide evangelization to know that there are so many classes of men and women being organized in connection with the Church and Sunday school around the Word of God and ready for Christian service; it brings the class into vital touch with its own denomination and with the county and state associations, making it possible for them to keep the class advised regarding conventions and new publications; it is an open declaration that the class desires to be counted as a loyal factor in winning the world to the Man of Galilee.

The Teacher.—In selecting a teacher for an organized class the rules of the church and the school should be recognized. It is essential that the best teacher who can be secured be placed in charge of such a class. The teaching of the Word of God is the magnet of power in every adult class. While no ironclad rule can be laid down, it is usually best to secure a man to teach men and a woman to teach women.

II

AN ADULT CLASS DEMONSTRATION

THE best way to learn how an adult Bible class does its work is to attend a business meeting of a live class. For the sake of those who cannot attend the sessions of other classes there is sometimes given in a central place a demonstration of adult class methods. For the occasion a class is brought together which is made up of officers and members from many classes, and a class meeting is held which shows the proper method of procedure in class meetings, and outlines valuable methods of week-day activity.

One such demonstration was given at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After taking part in the general opening exercises, the chairman of the Executive Committee asked the men to assemble on the pulpit platform, which had been enlarged to represent a classroom, for the transaction of business and the study of the lesson.¹ At the platform steps the members and visitors were greeted by the Reception Committee.

After a general exchange of greetings the class was called to order by the president, W. D. Stem. After prayer by a member of the class the secretary was asked to give his report.

¹ At this special demonstration session business was transacted which would properly belong to the semi-monthly, monthly, or quarterly business sessions, to be held on a week night, and followed by a social or an entertainment. The Sunday meeting is for Bible study. Preceding the Bible study half hour there may very properly be brief reports of some of the committees. During the transaction of business the president should preside. When business has been disposed of the teacher takes his place before the class.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

As secretary of this class I desire to make the following report for the year ending November 20, 1911:

Number on the roll to-day	60
Number on the roll one year ago	40
Increase in number on the roll for the year..	20
Present to-day.....	50 (83%)
Present a year ago.....	31 (76%)

We have with us to-day 11 visitors who, I find, have no Sunday-school connection. I should be pleased to add their names to our roll.

We have removed 10 names from the roll during the year and added 30, making an increase, as above stated, of 20.

Of the 10 members whose names have been removed from the roll, 7 are members of Organized Adult Bible Classes, as follows:

John and James Scott, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Thomas Robb, Buffalo, N. Y.
James Henry, Newark, N. J.
Joseph Boyd, Wilmington, Del.
James McConnell, Baltimore, Md.
Howard Hunt, Scranton, Pa.

We have reason to hope the other three members will return to the class very soon.

Five of our members will unite with the church next Sunday; then the entire class will be members of this church.

Return postal cards have been sent to absentees, earnestly requesting them to return to the class.

Receipts for the year were.....	\$265.50
Expenditures.....	255.50
Balance	\$ 10.00

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the secretary.)

THE ADULT CLASS

The president. "You will agree with me that this is a very gratifying report from the secretary. We shall now hear the annual report of the treasurer."

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

RECEIPTS

November 20, 1910—balance.....	\$ 10.50
Cash received for General Fund of Sunday school....	100.00
Cash received for Home and Foreign Missions.....	90.00
Special offering for Sociable and Class Banquet.....	25.00
Special offering for Flower Fund.....	10.00
Miscellaneous offerings.....	30.00
Total	\$265.50

EXPENDITURES

Voucher:

110, 112, 114, 116, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 134 (to order of the treasurer of the Sunday school for the school's General Fund ¹).....	\$100.00
115 Home Missions.....	45.00
130 Foreign Missions.....	45.00
117 Chairman Flower Committee.....	10.00
118 Chairman Social Committee.....	25.00
111 Pennsylvania State S. S. Assn. O. A. B. C.	5.00
133 Pennsylvania Bible Society.....	2.00
113 Improvement Fund Church.....	5.00
120 Men and Religion Forward Movement.....	2.50
122 Missionary Map for Class.....	3.50
124 Postage and Stationery (Secretary).....	2.25
126 Italian Mission.....	3.75
128 Sailors' Life Line League.....	2.75
132 Thanksgiving Basket, Poor Family.....	3.75
	\$255.50
Balance	10.00

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the treasurer.)

The treasurer. "I should like, Mr. President, to have this report audited by the proper committee."

¹ Every adult class should give to the treasury of the school a specified minimum per cent of receipts, which should be agreed on after conference with the officers of the church and Sunday school.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The president. "In compliance with the request of the treasurer, I shall appoint a committee of three to audit the account. The committee will report at the next monthly business meeting.

"We shall now be glad to hear the librarian's report."

REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN

The librarian is pleased to present the following report in behalf of himself and his assistants:

We have seen that each member of the class and each visitor is handed a hymn book on his arrival in his place in the school; if the singing has already begun, the book is open at the hymn then in use. When the members pass from the main room, where they assemble for the opening exercises, they are handed Bibles as they enter their classroom.

We have found that some of our own members are embarrassed by reason of their slowness in finding the lesson in the Bible, and we have learned that some new men, unaccustomed to the use of the Book, have hesitated to come, owing to this embarrassment. We have attempted to overcome this difficulty by having placed in the Bible at the lesson a slip of paper on which is written the subject of the lesson, with book, chapter and verses. For this purpose we have been using a rubber stamp, which is about worn out. The blank part of the slip can be used for notes and taken home at the close of the study of the lesson.

We further report that, having noticed carelessness on the part of some of our members in the handling of both hymn books and Bibles, we have made it our business during the past month to examine these books at the close of each session, when gathering them for replacing in the cases, in order that we might note all damage. This month it will cost \$2.75 to repair or replace books, one of which was deliberately marked with a pencil. We

THE ADULT CLASS

think that the class should make this damage good out of the treasury, if for no other reason than to teach us our responsibility in the care of church property.

We regret to report that the twenty volumes in our class missionary library are somewhat dusty on the covers and are elsewhere as clean and unspotted as when new. We should be glad to see a few more finger marks from actual use. This library is almost neglected. We should be glad to receive suggestions from the class as to the best methods to adopt to induce the men to use these splendid and intensely interesting books.

Permit us to call special attention to the volumes in the Adult Class Reading Course. These will be found on our shelves.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the librarian.)

The president. "That is certainly fine. I would suggest that some of you fellows keep your pencils in your pocket during the session hereafter.

"We shall now hear the report of the Membership Committee."

REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee reports that to-day's record shows eighty per cent of our enrollment in attendance. The contest between the married and single men results to-day in a material advance on the part of the married men, while the single men are holding their own. The record is as follows:

Married men—enrollment, 40; present, 28.

Single men—enrollment, 35; present, 22.

This change in standing may be explained partially by the fact that two of our members have, during the last week, taken unto themselves wives, and therefore change sides. Congratulations are in order for Brother Benton

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

and Brother Wilson. The class would be glad to respond to an invitation to a housewarming from either or both.

Of the absentees reported to this committee to be looked up, six are out of the city temporarily and letters of greeting and good wishes have been sent them in the name of the class. They have been asked to respond with some greeting that can be read at our next meeting. Five are either sick or are detained by sickness in their families, and their names have been turned over to the Visitation Committee. One of these expressed a desire that the class arrange for a cottage prayer meeting at his home; this request has been referred to the Devotional Committee. We are glad to report that Mr. Ames and Mr. Rickard, who have been absent for some time, are present, through the work of Mr. Wolfman of our committee. Mr. Wolfman, will you tell the class how you accomplished it?

Mr. Wolfman. "Last Sunday I called at the home of Brother Ames and learned that he had been obliged to be away from the city for several Sundays, and that he had gotten out of the habit of coming to Sunday school. He told himself that he needed the rest, and that the class would get along pretty well without him. I made an appointment and called for him on the way to prayer service on Wednesday night. The pastor spoke on 'The Man's Place in the Church,' and Mr. Ames was so impressed that he is not only here to-day, but has brought with him a friend who, we hope, will become one of us. . . . Mr. Rickard is a busy man and hard to catch, but I wrote him a letter, and had others do so, telling him how he was needed in our class discussion. Late in the week I dropped in for a few minutes at his office and just talked 'class.' If Brother Rickard's interest had lagged, it must have revived, for when I stopped for him on the way here I found him getting ready to come."

The chairman of the Membership Committee. "The committee presents two new members for the class, and as it

THE ADULT CLASS

may be interesting to know how they were secured, I think Mr. Davis will tell us in his own words."

Mr. Davis. "The committee has a list of names of prospective members; the two who unite with us to-day have been on this list for some time. They had both been visited several times by different members of the committee, and have been attending our Sunday-evening services. Last week Mr. Wolfman entertained Mr. Traymore and his wife at dinner, and during the evening several men of the class dropped in to talk over some class matters, and, incidentally, met Mr. Garritt, who began to see what a live thing our class is. The result was that he decided to become one of us. During the last week Mr. Frazer has received a visit each day from some member of the class, and when Mr. Sarvis called to-day he found that Mr. Frazer had considerably concluded to become a member and save us further trouble."

The chairman. "Mr. President, the committee is very glad to introduce Mr. Traymore and Mr. Frazer to you as members of the class."

The president (to the members, as they rise and receive the greetings of the class). "I can't reach you, brethren, but I want to say you are very fortunate to be in this class."

The chairman. "The committee calls your attention to the fact that we have with us several visitors, to whom we extend a hearty welcome. Every visitor is a possible member, and always a welcome guest. We are always interested in knowing how and why our visitors come. Perhaps some would be willing to tell us. Mr. Morrison, of Chicago, is one of our guests to-day. May I ask him to tell us how he came to be here?"

Mr. Morrison. "I am a traveling salesman representing a Chicago firm. When at home I attend church. On the hotel desk last night I noticed a card advertising

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

your church and class, and partly decided to look you up. This morning, when I came down late to breakfast, two of your members were waiting for me and invited me to your morning preaching service. There more than a dozen men sought me out and urged me to come to the class. Could I do anything else?"

The chairman. "The committee recommends that the class be divided into groups of seven, each of which shall endeavor to increase its number to ten. The first group to accomplish this shall be known as No. 1; the second, as No. 2, etc. Each group is then to be responsible for its own members, seeing that they attend, and if absent, reporting the cause. In this way we believe that we can easily pass the century mark in our enrollment.

"The attention of the class is called to a meeting of the Membership Committee to be held on Monday night at seven o'clock. It is proposed to decide upon a definite plan and begin at that time the work of 'following up' the names reported on the cards handed to our pastor on Saturday as a result of the great home visitation in this city on that day. We urge every man in the class, who can possibly do so, to meet with us and join in this work of getting men."

The president. "Now we are to hear from the Social Committee."

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social Committee wants this to be a very sociable organization, so before we have the report I want every man to stand and shake hands with the man on his left and then with the man on his right. Please shake!

Our social on last Tuesday night was a great success. We met at the home of the president at half-past six. Three members of the Reception Committee assisted the president in receiving the men and made all feel at home immediately.

THE ADULT CLASS

The members were asked to bring three things: first, a happy, social spirit; second, a helpful suggestion; and third, a prospective member. Thirty-five men—twenty members and fifteen friends—sat down to dinner at seven o'clock. The class artist had painted place cards for each guest, suggestive of some peculiarity or class activity. For instance, the card of the chairman of the Social Committee pictured two men, jolly-looking fellows, enjoying a funny story, with the motto, "Laugh and the world laughs with you"; the card of the chairman of the Membership Committee showed two fishermen with a net and the motto "Catch 'em alive!" The card of the teacher was an earnest-looking man with an open Bible and the motto, "Search the Scriptures"; the president's card was a smiling man, holding a gavel, and the motto was, "Me for a second term!"

After a very enjoyable dinner, the president warmly expressed his pleasure in having the class and its friends at his home and as his guests. He then asked the members to give, in one-minute speeches, their opinions of the class, its work and its future. Twenty-one bright, crisp, helpful, suggestive speeches were made, including the pastor's, in exactly twenty-one minutes. Several of the visitors, who were not members of the class, expressed their appreciation of the privilege of being of the party.

At nine o'clock the men were greatly surprised by the arrival of the wives, sweethearts and sisters of the members. Music, singing, readings and recitations concluded the most delightful social event the class has ever had. As a result of this social there are eight new members of the class.

At our social next month the class will entertain the boys of our school, and the Boy Scouts will act as a Reception Committee. A great evening with the boys is anticipated. Men, be ready for it!

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the chairman.)

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The president. "We shall next hear the report of the Social Service Committee."

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE COMMITTEE

First. We have noticed that less than twenty-five per cent of the male members of our church are in regular attendance at the Sunday services. We have, therefore, organized this class into a Visiting Committee. After making out eight lists of from ten to fifteen names of the male members of our church, we distributed these lists to the members of this class, who have been visiting, two by two, the men of our church. It is our intention to give these several lists to different pairs of men, so that before we get through perhaps a dozen or more men will have called on the delinquents. In this way we expect to let the irregular members know that they are being missed. The duties of this Visiting Committee are purely social, and all understand that if they hear any adverse criticisms they are not to advertise these among the congregation, but quietly report them to the pastor or the officers of the church. We have mentioned our plan to the members of the women's class and suggested that perhaps they could do likewise with the women members of the church. We suggest that ten minutes be given each Sunday, before the study of the lesson, to reports from our Visiting Committee.

Second. We have secured a list of parents not members of the church whose children are in our Sunday school. We expect to visit these fathers and mothers and tell them how glad we are that their children are coming to our school. If they have no regular church home we shall invite them to ours, and also extend a cordial invitation to become members of our organized Bible classes. When we get the cards from the Home Visitation Committee we shall let the Visiting Committee of this class look after these so far as possible.

THE ADULT CLASS

Third. We have secured the consent of our church officers to open the Sunday-school rooms of our church for the neighborhood children Friday evenings from December to March, inclusive, from 7:30 to 9 P. M. We shall organize the girls into sewing, crocheting, fancy work and other classes. For the boys we shall have plain carpentry work in the basement. We find that some of the men and women of our Bible classes have had experience in drawing and raffia work, so that it will be possible to have other classes in these subjects. We believe that this will make the church an important factor in the neighborhood and be the means of getting recruits for our Sunday school and church. We are now looking for a competent person who will act as general supervisor for this work. Some two hundred dollars will be needed, but we expect to get this sum by voluntary contributions from our members.

Fourth. We have sent one of the regular members of our class to a down-town church as teacher. The pastor of this church told us that he could use twenty more competent teachers; and that if he had that number no less than two hundred boys and girls, who are now on the streets on Sundays, could be brought into his Sunday school.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the chairman.)

The president. "We shall now listen to the report of the Devotional Committee."

REPORT OF THE DEVOTIONAL COMMITTEE

During the past month we have asked the members of the class to devote at least ten minutes of each day to the study of God's Word. Forty of the men have promised to do so.

We took our pastor by surprise the other night when a few of us called on him at the manse and asked for the

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

privilege of meeting with him for fifteen minutes of prayer before the morning service. You may be sure the request was granted. He says it will be a source of inspiration to him to enter the pulpit on Sunday mornings in the knowledge that some of his men are holding him up before God in prayer. We want every member of the class who will volunteer for this ministry of prayer to join us in the pastor's study next Sunday morning.

We have had an average attendance of thirty-five members of the class at the Sunday-night service. It has been a source of great pleasure to your committee to see the way in which the men have scattered through the audience prepared to greet strangers in any part of the church. If a stranger gets out without a hearty greeting he must go by way of the chimney, as that is the only place left unguarded, and it is warm even there these winter nights.

Three men, with their wives, have confessed Christ during the past month and have been received into the church. This has been brought about by God's blessing on the efforts of one member of the committee. He is not a graduate of the schools, he has had few educational advantages, but he possesses two indispensable qualifications for soul-winning: he has a personal knowledge of Christ as his Redeemer and Lord, and his daily life is a witness for the truth of the Christian religion.

Men of the class are learning that it is not such a terrible undertaking to pray in public. Four new voices were heard in prayer during the devotional exercises of the class. A number took similar part at the midweek prayer service.

We have organized a branch Sunday school in Irish-town, across the railroad, and have arranged for cottage prayer meetings in the homes of these long-neglected people. There is much enthusiasm on their part, and some of them have been seen at the Sunday-night service.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the chairman.)

THE ADULT CLASS

The president. "We shall now have the report of the Visitation Committee."

REPORT OF THE VISITATION COMMITTEE

During the past month your committee has again sent groceries and provisions to the B—— family, and has left a standing order at the baker's for a daily delivery of two loaves of bread at the home of the G—— family, where real distress exists. Neighbors have been interested in them and they will not be allowed to suffer. If Mr. G—— sobers up and makes good on the odd jobs we are getting him, we shall get him the proper clothing to come to class. He says he will come when he can get respectable clothes.

Jimmy M——, whom the Membership Committee brought into the class from a speakeasy one Sunday, and who was later converted in a class meeting, is again in sore trouble. This time the poor fellow has been in the hospital with appendicitis. He has just come back to his home in very bad shape and wholly unfit for work. His previous long illness, with fever, used up all his savings and left him in debt. With a home to maintain, he is certainly in a bad way. Some of the members of your committee advanced him the money to pay his rent and a few urgent bills. We are planning this week to surprise him with a substantial gift from the class funds with which to help put him on his feet again. He is still unable to work, but during the two years he has been in the church he has lived a splendid Christian life. During that time he had a siege of blood poison, a run of fever and now appendicitis, yet he has never complained. Your committee has looked after him in each illness. The boys should drop around and give Jimmy a word of cheer.

In recent months the members have probably missed Mr. W——. He has cancer of the stomach. His inability to work has brought his family into very straitened circumstances, there being six children and only two old

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

enough to earn anything. He is a weaver, and his earnings were not large at any time. His condition has been such that he could not be taken care of properly at home, so, after a conference with the family, your committee made application to get him into the Home for Incurables. Through the influence of one of the Board we are enabled to have him admitted at once, your committee giving the necessary bond. One of our members, who is a chauffeur, procured for us the big car of his employer, and by means of it made the journey to the home as easy and delightful as possible; the trip was made through the prettiest parts of the park. Mr. W—— is being made comfortable for the short time he has to live. As we bade him good-by at the home his parting words were of appreciation to the class.

A member of the class who has been out of work for a long time secured—through one of our number—a chance to drive a delivery wagon, but he did not have fifty dollars to deposit; the deposit being required of all drivers. Your committee learned of this, and the required amount has been advanced by a number of friends until such time as he can repay the loan.

Most of you will remember the little Englishman we introduced at our last class supper; he had just come over to America. We soon learned that he was a victim of the drink habit. You will recall that he attended our class for a while, but we were unable to hold him after he moved quite a distance from the church. Through him his sister's husband has given himself up to drink. This poor woman is heartbroken and has appealed to the class to try to do something for these fellows. Upon investigation we found the children in need of proper clothing, and have taken care of them and brought them into Sunday school.

We have one of our strongest men working in a tactful way to welcome these men. We expect to land them both in class one of these days.

The funds at the disposal of this committee are getting low, but, from past experience, we know that the mere

THE ADULT CLASS

mention of the fact is all that is necessary to have the matter remedied at once.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the chairman.)

The president. "Now we are ready to hear from the Temperance Committee."

REPORT OF THE TEMPERANCE COMMITTEE

During the past month the members of the committee have visited in the homes of fifteen men who were habitual users of strong drink, and have succeeded in obtaining a promise from eight of them to discontinue the use of liquors, and we hope to win over the other seven.

We have also urged our friends and neighbors to refuse to sign any applications for the renewal of liquor licenses. We would respectfully ask that the class, as a body, coöperate with us in this. We think we can thus reduce the number of saloons in our neighborhood.

We would also ask the class to authorize this committee to obtain temperance literature for distribution wherever we think it will accomplish the most good.

We have frequently heard complaints made by teachers that it is difficult to obtain new material for use in the teaching of the temperance lessons. This committee has, therefore, planned to gather fresh material for the use of the teachers of our school.

The committee is also planning another temperance meeting, when a converted drunkard will tell the story of his fall and redemption.

It has come to our knowledge that the proprietor of one of the saloons in our neighborhood recently sold liquor to some of our boys who are under age; we have, therefore, reported the case to the Law and Order Society and are prepared to furnish the necessary evidence to insure his conviction for the offense, and the revocation of his license.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

We have just learned that the front of the residence at 1561 South Eighteenth Street is being torn out for the purpose of opening a saloon, and I move that this class enter a protest to the court.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the chairman.)

The president. "The last report of this business session will be made by the Missionary Committee."

REPORT OF THE MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

The Missionary Committee gladly brings to your attention a few facts taken from the last report received from the Elat Mission Station, Africa, in which our class has been interested for several years.

The report states that over 25 schools, having 2000 pupils, are supervised from the Elat center; that they cover a radius of 50 miles; that all of them are taught by pupils; that 600 conversions have been recorded; and that last winter they had over 1300 present each Sunday for five consecutive weeks.

The church attendance is still larger; for example, on July 4 a communion service was held attended by 3500. The church building accommodates 2000, so that 1500 were compelled to sit outside the building, these listening to the message and joining in the singing of the gospel songs. At one average Sunday service 2,500 were present, and 1368 envelopes, containing \$81.13, were taken up.

The Manual Training School has a wonderful record. Since January the carpentry class has earned 5200 marks, and the tailoring class 2450 marks. They report that the demand for the furniture made by the pupils is greater than the output.

Inasmuch as at the last meeting of the officers and teachers of our school a resolution was passed donating our library of 400 books to our mission school, started two years ago in North Dakota, we suggest that this class

THE ADULT CLASS

offer to pack and ship these books and pay the freight charges.

We desire to call your attention to the interesting account of the splendid progress being made in home-mission fields in the last issue of our church missionary magazine.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed by the secretary.)

The president. "How many of you fellows read our church missionary magazine? Raise your hands!"

A member. "I move that this class subscribe to the magazine for the coming year, and that each man be given a copy."

The motion was carried.

Another member. "While we are subscribing, I move that those who do not now take the Adult Class magazine of our church should be provided with a copy regularly."

The motion was carried.

The president. "I appreciate the loyalty and the excellent manner in which your reports have been prepared and presented. They are up to date; you have reduced them to writing, and this brings out the very material which you want to submit. This is the way we want it presented. It is very commendable. Is there anything further before we close the business session of the class?"

On motion, the class adjourned.

Following the business session, W. G. Landes, secretary of the Pennsylvania Sabbath School Association, taught the lesson for the following Sunday

III

THE ADVANTAGES OF FEDERATION

IN many communities the various adult Bible classes have been united into federated bodies which are acting together for many purposes. Rev. Charles Edward Kunkle, whose active connection with federation work enables him to speak with authority, has given the statement made in this chapter of the advantages of federation:

Three Functions.—There are at least three distinct though not unrelated functions which the federation idea may be made to serve: (1) The Vitalization of Class Work; (2) The Lifting of Classes Above Mere Denominationalism; (3) Making the Classes a Force for Righteousness.

Vitalizes Class Work.—Federation inspires the individual classes to do better work within themselves. It makes possible the pressure of the larger life of the larger whole upon the separate parts. Federation enlarges the sense of fellowship, which means more power for each class unit and also each personal unit. Men work better in the things of the Christian life when there is a broad fellowship of service. The federation of classes develops the sense of mass movement, and thereby helps to hold men more steadfastly to their ideals and responsibilities. Men are lifted above mere formalism and institutional service, focusing their minds upon the individual.

Federation stands for a more vital sense of brotherhood among men. This is essential to effective Bible-class work. The weakness of much of our organized work is

THE ADULT CLASS

the lack of strong, sustaining fellowship. It must be remembered that the individual is not for the organized class, but the organized class for the individual.

The members of our organized classes, as of the church, need to live their lives in the sense of the larger whole of which they are a part. Isolation, independence, exclusiveness and aloofness, whether as classes or as individuals, make impossible vital fellowship and efficient ministry, whether in the word of truth or in personal service. The presence of these conditions accounts for much of the failure of organized classes to give an abundant justification for their existence.

Lifts Above Mere Denominationalism.—There is great need of exhibiting before the world the essential oneness of Christianity. Many have stumbled and many are now stumbling over our divisiveness. The subdivision of Christians into warring and jealous factions has little in it to inspire the man who wants to get into the way of the kingdom. Many find it difficult to harmonize our denominational divisions and spirit with the Christianity of Christ. It all seems too much like “church-anity” instead of Christianity.

We have been giving splendid demonstrations of our common Christian enterprise in the large interdenominational conferences and conventions, where representatives of the various coöperating Christian bodies have interpreted the work of their several bodies on the higher level. But the spirit and sweep of such gatherings have not yet made their impress upon those who constitute the rank and file of our local communities. Into every local center the sense of the larger oneness of Christ’s followers

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

needs to be carried and lodged permanently. Instead of beating the tom-tom of the denomination we need to sound the clarion call of the united kingdom. The Federation of Organized Adult Bible Classes is the happy method for this service.

Makes Classes a Force for Righteousness.—Men will stand more firmly for the interests of righteousness when they have the consciousness of fellowship in the interests of righteousness. Federation serves to put ginger into men's Christianity. It will help the weak take position in the ranks of righteousness. It will put a whip of cords into men's hands. It will bring into expression the note of imperialism in Christianity. It will inspire the forces of righteousness to claim their rights to the right of way in this world. It will make men bold for God and truth, for justice and purity in politics, business and society.

A federation of two hundred, three hundred, five hundred, one thousand men in any given community will accelerate the slow-coming reforms of the community. Politicians will respect the wishes of the better element of the people when they learn how to assert themselves, as the enemies of the good know how to assert their wishes. The fear of the Lord will never be realized by those who look for personal gain rather than the common welfare, until the people of the Lord show their colors and assert their rights and strength. The federation of our Bible classes is the most practical way to this end. The fear of the Lord is the same as the fear of the Lord's people. What else has so good a right to be forceful as righteousness? Surely, it is not a passive thing. It is God terribly alive in men for goodness.

IV

ORGANIZING AN ADULT BIBLE CLASS FEDERATION

WASHINGTON County, Pennsylvania, is one of the best organized adult class territories in the country. There are organized Bible classes in many towns. There are federations of the town classes in a number of places and there is a county union.

One of the most active of these town federations is that at Charleroi, organized in 1909. Concerning this Rev. G. G. Kerr has said:

"Our first effort was to get before the adult classes of the district the purpose and also the possibilities of such an organization. The chief features emphasized were the increase of class membership, a deepening of interest in Bible study and the winning of souls to Jesus Christ. The federation idea appealed to the most active members in all the classes and also to persons who were not at that time identified with any Sunday school.

"There is a Membership Committee whose object it is to secure by personal canvass the names of all persons who have not joined some class, and to see that all these are visited, not once, but many times if necessary, in the interest of the Bible school. A marked increase in attendance in the different schools of the district is an evidence of the value of this kind of work.

"The importance of Bible study is strongly urged, not only during the class period, but at other times as well.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The power of the Word is being felt and many are becoming interested and active in Christian work who heretofore took but little interest. Men in business are coming to realize as never before that Christianity pays for this life as well as for the life that is to come, and that the best way to make men honest is to give them a vision of Jesus Christ.

"But the thought most strongly emphasized is that of personal evangelistic effort, not merely as a special effort during a revival season, but at all times. We recognize God's willingness to work through men to save men everywhere and always. Personal work is urged and, to some extent, practiced. The results are manifest.

"A federation banquet is held occasionally, at which time a number of short talks are given by the members from the different classes. At one of these banquets such topics as 'The Value of Men,' 'Man's Duty to His Church,' 'Man as a Social Being,' 'The Value of Federation' and 'My Part in Federation' were discussed. More than a hundred men were present at this banquet; the speakers and some of those most active were men who were attracted to the work because the different classes showed they meant business."

This simple constitution of the federation is a model:

ARTICLE I. NAME

The Federation of Adult Bible Classes of Charleroi District.

ARTICLE II. OBJECT

To increase the enrollment of men in the adult Bible classes so that their influence may be used to interest others, young and old, in Bible study, church membership, personal and civic betterment.

THE ADULT CLASS

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this federation shall consist of all male members of adult Bible classes in Charleroi District and all men who are officially associated with Sunday-school work.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

The officers of this federation shall consist of president, vice president, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer.

ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

The committees shall consist of a Membership, Social and Entertainment, Devotional and Civic.

ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Duties of officers shall be those usually expected in said capacities.

Duties of committees shall be: Membership—To devise and execute ways and means of increasing the membership of the federation.

Social and Entertainment—To provide suitable entertainment for the meetings of the federation.

Devotional—To devise means for furthering class organization, for the betterment of class plans and methods of soul-winning.

Civic—To devise means of eliminating vice and promoting the social betterment and the elevation of our fellow man in his civic life.

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present, notice of such proposed amendment having been given at least one month previous to action.

V

ONE TOWN FEDERATION AT WORK

THESE minutes of one meeting of a small town federation give many hints to those who desire to undertake similar work:

The Membership Committee of the federation, consisting of representatives of nearly all the classes enrolled, had a meeting on Sunday afternoon.

A careful study and analysis of the results of the house-to-house visitation leads us to the conclusion that there are from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred persons in the town, over sixteen years of age, who are not members or regular attendants of any of the Sunday schools. We believe that this is a conservative statement. It amounts to a challenge to the federation. To seek to win at least a thousand of these to active fellowship in the Sunday schools during the next year is the task which your committee would lay upon the classes of this federation.

We desire also to call the attention of the federation to the low standard of attendance in many, if not all, of the classes. There seems to be on the part of many members of the classes a lack of serious regard of their class membership. Too many are enrolled who attend only casually. Thus the efficiency of class organization is seriously impaired. It is our duty, if possible, to raise the percentage of attendance, in order that a more satisfactory standard of efficiency may be achieved. Regularity in attendance is essential to efficient class work. Membership involves the obligation of constancy in the matter of attendance.

THE ADULT CLASS

In view of these conditions before us, we present for your acceptance the following propositions, with the view of stimulating the proper effort on the part of all the classes to bring about a larger ingathering of men and women into the fellowship of the Sunday schools, and a higher standard of attendance. We sincerely believe that our classes can attain a much higher state of efficiency than that enjoyed at present.

We, therefore, propose that the classes of the federation engage in a campaign of effort, touching the conditions in question. We recommend that the campaign begin with March 1 and close June 15, and that the following standards of efficiency be adopted:

Percentage of Attendance.—To stimulate regularity of attendance we propose to institute a roll of honor, assigning the classes, according to their percentage of attendance, to one of the following divisions: (A) Front Line Classes—All achieving, for the period in question, an attendance of eighty per cent. (B) Star Classes—All achieving an attendance of seventy per cent. And (C) Banner Classes—All having an attendance of fifty-five per cent.

Your committee recognizes that these are low standards; but we believe they are sufficiently high for a beginning.

Your committee recommends also that in working out the percentage of attendance only those be counted bona fide members who shall have been present at least once each month after the date of enrollment.

Your committee also requests that at the end of the campaign the records of the classes be given up to the Membership Committee of the federation to determine

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

the percentage of attendance, in order that uniformity may be guaranteed.

Percentage of Increase of Membership.—Since there are so many in the town who are without the fellowship of our Sunday schools, the classes of the federation should experience a steady growth in numbers until all the available material has either been assimilated or thoroughly tested. We recommend, therefore, that the classes be ranked at the end of the period of campaign according to their efficiency in winning new members on the basis of the percentage of increase in membership over the enrollment at the beginning of the period.

Per Capita Offering.—We believe that there is need of larger offerings by the members of our classes to the support of our Sunday schools. Too many are bringing inadequate offerings. The penny conception of the Sunday school should speedily be banished. We believe that the measure of our offerings vitally affects the efficiency of our classes. We propose, therefore, to institute a roll of honor of classes according to their per capita offerings during the period of the campaign, the per capita rank of the classes to be based on their attendance rather than the membership of the classes.

If these recommendations and propositions are accepted by the federation to-day, it is the intention of your committee to arrange in conjunction with either the Committee on Public Meetings or the Social Committee a meeting of the federation as soon as possible after June 15, when the results of the campaign will be made known and the honors awarded in some appropriate manner.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

VII

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

BY

REV. FRANKLIN McELFRESH, PH.D.



THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

I

A PERSONAL WORD

ARE you looking forward to teaching in the Sunday school? Then you ought to have some months of earnest study for this fine task. Christian educators, speaking through the Committee on Education of the International Sunday School Association, have set a standard that is in their judgment within the reach of all preparing to teach, and is the least that any teacher who is thoroughly in earnest in desiring to do successful work will ask. Two courses are provided, as follows:

I. First Standard Course.—The minimum requirements for this course are: Fifty lesson periods, of which at least twenty lessons shall be devoted to the study of the Bible, and at least seven lessons to the pupil, seven lessons to the teacher and seven lessons to the Sunday school. The remaining nine lessons may be devoted to any of the above required subjects.

II. Advanced Standard Course.—The minimum requirements for this course are: One hundred lesson periods, with a minimum of forty lessons devoted to the study of the Bible, ten lessons to the pupil, ten lessons to the teacher, ten lessons to the Sunday school, ten lessons to

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

church history and ten lessons to missions. The remaining ten lessons may be devoted to any of the above required subjects. These are minimum requirements—the very least that will meet a reasonable demand, but earnest students in preparation for successful work are not satisfied with the smallest, they seek the best. For thorough work two years are needed for the First Standard Course and three years for the Advanced Standard Course.

In enrolling for these courses you have the privilege of joining a class that meets at the Sunday-school hour under a teacher interested in this great theme. This is perhaps the best way, for thus you will be in the main current of Sunday-school life, and will be enabled to put your thought upon this work alone. Or you may meet with a class of teachers on a week day, and can then be called upon to put your newly learned lessons into practice in the Sunday work of the school. If, however, it is impossible to become a member of a class meeting on Sunday or during the week, you may still take the course of study alone, receiving your examination questions and securing your diploma precisely as if the work were done in class. There are thousands of men and women studying secular courses in this way to-day. The University of Wisconsin has several thousand students using this method in the study of subjects like economics, sociology and literature. Doctors and lawyers thus strive to keep up with the advance of their professions by extra studies. Why should not the student preparing to teach the Bible show a like energy? Without a deep and fixed purpose, without a real offering of the life to Christ, Sunday-school teaching will have little of joy in it and can be crowned

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

with but small success; but if his call is ringing clear and insistent in the heart, preparation for intelligent teaching lies within the reach of any student, even the most lonely.

As soon as you show a willing heart your surprise will be great at finding the numbers who hasten to bid you welcome. There are few Sunday schools where the superintendent and pastor are not prayerfully anxious for more trained teachers; then the welcome given by the teachers already enjoying the rich experiences of this delightful service will soon prove to you what a noble companionship awaits you among those dealing with the younger life. Few ties of friendship are closer knit or more lasting than those formed by common interest in this sacred volunteer service.

You will find that the Sunday-school world of to-day is a very live, energetic and brilliant realm, and no true spirit entering its ample gateways need fear loneliness of heart or narrowness of brain. It is a land of brave, strong men, many of whom have thought long and deep; of true-hearted women who have enriched it with the mystic endowment of their love and brightened its darkest places with their clear-eyed faith. Open your heart to your fellow teachers, mingle with the groups and throngs at assembly and convention, open your brain to the writers, ever alert to learn of and solve new problems, and scanning the horizon of the kingdom for news of fresh victories of the cross, and you will not be likely to lose heart or be lonesome in the Sunday-school world.

II

THE PLAN

THE teacher-training work is fourfold. Provision is made for a study of:

1. The Bible.
2. The pupil.
3. The teacher.
4. The organization of the Sunday school.

A careful reading of the next four chapters will show how important it is that none of these subjects be omitted, and how attractive is the fourfold plan.

III

THE BIBLE

Study the Bible; Not Merely About the Bible.—You are to learn to think big thoughts about the Bible, to let the eye search its vast landscapes, to catch glimpses of the mountain peaks along the way. You are to catch the messages of the books, a whole book at a time. You are to learn to look into the faces of the great men of the Bible, to know their features and become familiar with them. You are to travel up and down the land until you will no more be lost in Galilee or the streets of Jerusalem than in the roads of your home neighborhood or the avenues of your own city. The careful study of the helps in Bible geography which we have to-day will make the Holy Land well-trodden ground for us. Lew Wallace wrote the accurate and realistic descriptions of "Ben-Hur" before he had ever seen the Orient; he had nothing but the printed page and the map. You, too, can make some delightful home excursions into Palestine if you will use the stereoscope and stereograph.

Historical Outline.—You can learn to put each book in the true setting with its sixty-five companions. Each one fits into its place in the historical development with as much nicety as the pieces of a locomotive. When you thus look over the Bible history it will become no longer a mass of scraps and fragments, as it too often seems to the teacher, but each life will be seen as a link in a chain,

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

and you will find delight in tracing out the long preparations for advance, and in searching for God's chosen agents in carrying them out. These men walk for a moment in the illumined path of God's mighty ongoing, and when you see each one under this divine light Bible history will be one of the most fascinating studies in the world.

Richness of the Bible.—The Bible is so many-sided that anyone who comes with open mind must find some line of intense interest in it. Are you a student of literature? Then study the Bible, and you will wonder at the supreme literary values hidden in these old-time words. You will catch the poetic grandeur of the Old Testament, the rugged loftiness of the prophets and the simple yet vivid force of the New Testament.

Or perhaps the dramatic side of the Bible will appeal to you even more—its penetration into the secrets of the heart as revealed by the life story of saints and sinners. The Book discloses the most powerfully drawn characters of all time. They march across its stage with their hearts open and naked to the eye. We get to know them as we know no living people.

A Living Message.—But the spiritual message of the Bible must be its crowning value to you, as it has ever been to men of all kinds and conditions. When you see it as a real history, and ask what was the feeling and purpose of this man whose word lies open before you, you will have a new message from the Book. Ask: Why did Paul write his letter to the Philippians? What stirred a farmer like Amos to speak before the king of Israel? What was the religious experience behind the poetry of the

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

Thirty-second Psalm? What was the inner life of John before he wrote the Fourth Gospel? Get as close as you can to these living men and you will find the Bible constantly unfolding before you.

Personal Study.—As you get into this closer personal relation to the writers of the Bible by a study of Bible history, geography, manners and customs, and as you put each man in his own real place, then will it become more than ever the living word of God spoken to men, an experience in another human heart revealed to you for your guidance. For this intimate knowledge you will need to study maps and also to draw them with your own hand. You will need more than mere reading—careful study and some memory drills, frequent and sometimes taxing reviews will be a necessity. The Bible cannot be mastered by cheap devices or hasty lessons. There is a development throughout the whole book, and the mind must grow with the study of it and allow time for the sublimest conceptions that have ever been uttered in human speech to imprint themselves upon the brain. Do not make haste with your Bible study. Can you comprehend the ocean at a glance? Do not the mountains grow larger before your eyes with the years? Does not the sky spread wider and vaster before the eye of the astronomer? Take time to catch the secret of the Bible.

Teaching Values of the Bible.—Many earnest Bible students fail as teachers of the Bible because they have not considered the teaching values of the Bible. The Graded Lessons are making the value of the Bible in the education of the young far clearer to us than it has been

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

before. There is a Bible for the little child and a Bible for the older child, there are pages full of great hero stories—the noblest, strongest ever told—that appeal to youth, and there are mighty messages that meet the years of doubt and unrest of young manhood and womanhood. There are chapters and books which can be comprehended and whose value can be known only in mature life. The adaptation of the Bible to the need of each period of life and to particular persons and classes is one of the tests and triumphs of teaching skill, and one of the fine results that follow a careful study of the Bible with the pupil in mind.

IV

THE PUPIL

New Interest in Child Study.—Is there any need of studying the pupil? I hear a very plain and common-sense teacher say some scornful things about pedagogy and psychology; then this elderly person says his mother knew something about training children, and she never heard these four-story words. And he says, moreover, there was some teaching of the Bible in his own boyhood days, and that the teacher was a man who won his whole class of boys to Christ without any of this modern machinery. Now all this is true enough; the power of earnest souls to touch the life is above all rules. The swift messages of love fly to the heart in flashes no pen can describe. But is there nothing to learn? Why, the men who have been digging radium out of the old earth these last ten years had something new to tell us, and those keen observers who found a way to send messages a thousand miles through the air without wires had something new to tell us. And, do you not think the human soul has as much undiscovered treasure as the earth and the air? The men and the women who have watched and prayed and loved are discoverers in the newly found pathways of the soul just as truly as the men who found radium and wireless telegraphy. There is some real and well-proved knowledge about the unfolding and the workings of the human mind that can be gained from books. The great students and teachers of the inner life have not worked in vain. There

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

is much to learn that is clear and precious. Many a guidepost has been set up along the roadway by travelers who have gone before us. Psychology cannot be brushed aside as a fad, nor pedagogy be laughed at as a tiresome set of rules. Into books on these subjects some of the wisest and noblest men have poured the gold of their experience and insight, and it would be as wise to refuse to cross the river on a steel bridge as to refuse to use the pathway their long labor has made smooth.

Need of Insight.—What do you think about the little child? Are you to pour information into his mind? Or are you to guide him by kindly suggestion and gracious influence? Do you think of him as a real, living, active soul, sure to express himself in some way? There are discussions in the pages of the master teachers about attention and interest and point of contact that are akin to genius in their suggestions. How many eager, hungry teachers there are who are gaining new joy and new power by the words shouted back to them from the heights by the great pathfinders who have gone before!

A certain reverence and wondering love for childhood comes with our true study of it and our loving contact with it. The capacity for religion is a birthright of an infant soul. He is God's child, not an angel, but a very human sort of little being, aglow with fresh and marvelous activity. The best we can do is to begin knocking at the door of the senses. We bring color, motion and sweet sounds as inducements. We do not create anything. We simply lure these playing and pattering feet, hurrying every moment somewhere, to the best pathways. All kindergarten workers have learned the secret of turning

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

play into life values for the years to come, and this gentle secret must be caught by all who would look into the tearful or smiling faces of beginners. It is the woman's art, and her subtle power has no richer field of service outside the home than with the beginners in the Sunday school.

Need of Sympathy.—The child lives in a fairyland and only touches this dull earth for bread-and-butter reasons, and you cannot step upon his magical carpet unless you have a story in your mouth. Prepare to be a story-teller if you would teach the child in the primary room. It is becoming a part of a great quest nowadays to find the home of the old-time story-tellers who lived back nearer the morning time of the earth. Brick pavements and street cars and the hard-grind, practical, western life have carried us far away from them. We want to moralize and reason and talk about the abstract, but the child will not have it. He listens with gasping of breath to stories. He wants to feel the magical touch of his own fairyland. Now the Bible is the richest storehouse of ancient story-lore. It is full of adventures; it has wonderful pictures of people; its stories are short and pointed and powerful, but we must learn the art of telling them. We must learn to turn them into the everyday speech of childhood. We must bring these little dramas of the old Hebrew world right down to the life of to-day.

Importance of the Junior Years.—In the later period of work the junior boy or girl longs for heroes and heroines. It may be that the boys and girls have dull ears for preaching or for moral axioms. But they are intensely interested in actual people and, very often, in ideal folks as

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

well. They are ablaze with sentiment and all on fire for brave men and beautiful women and for adventure and activity. Prepare to people their shadow land with the real type of hero and heroine. The teacher and pupil are often in the same room and yet a thousand miles apart. The teacher is talking about goodness and righteousness and the boy is day-dreaming about baseball pitchers and maybe prize fighters, or the girl is probably thinking of heiresses and queens. Now the teacher must find some path by which he can reach the mind and they two can come together. He must begin to talk about some one in whom they are both interested.

Christian Heroes.—Put the heroes of modern missions, the stories of the strong men of mighty deeds who have lived and left their names upon the pages of Christian history, side by side with the bravery and manliness told of in the Bible. Hunt for the nobler side of life to-day. There is no lack of it, and the search for them will soon bring to light stories of courage and self-denial and Christian faith that will stir the blood and win the heart of the young life to which you are speaking. The teacher should live in a world peopled with noble characters, ever using the finest womanhood of the present and the men who are doing sublime things to illumine the Bible types of character. Learn the stories of Luther and Knox and Wesley, of Whitman, of Père Marquette, of Paton and the many others who are worthy to be ranked in this class of daring, self-sacrificing men.

Memory's golden period is here, and you can readily freight the mind with the choicest words from the Bible, with the nobler Christian poetry and the hero stories of

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

the Christian ages. John Ruskin's mother caused him, when he was a boy, to commit to memory twenty-six chapters of the Bible on Sunday afternoons. She chose the great chapters. In his later years Ruskin said of this, "In doing this she established my soul in life." To these chapters, stored in memory, he attributed much of the rhythm and dignity of his matchless prose.

Leadership for the Teen Years.—There come now the days when the child rushes through the trying intermediate years to the fascinating period of youth. The child life is flung aside with disdain, the face is forward, the form lifts, shoulders and chest expand, the brain gathers new force, the will shows signs of revolt. This is the coming of the individual into his kingdom. Contradictions and contrasts now bewilder the teacher. The awkward boy and the shy girl strengthen and bloom. It is the springtime of life, the day for seed-sowing, the day of March blizzards and April showers. It is the time of lasting impressions from a single word, of sweet friendships and sharp aversions, of gloomy doubts and quick decisions. As the days of fourteen to sixteen come, the crossroads of life lie straight across the way of our young people. Shall they turn to the right or to the left, to error and sin and shame, or to right living and earnest purpose and the joy of service?

The privilege of influence right now is one of the richest ever offered the parent, the friend, the teacher and the pastor. Authority is much a thing of the past, for these young souls want to try their wings in the morning air and are eager for its storms and allured by its whirlwinds. This is the time for strong words, for personal, heart-to-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

heart talks, for positive soul-winning, and for frank and wise meeting of questions and answering of doubts kindly and fairly. Put forth all your strength and skill now to win them to Christ, for these are the golden days, and like opportunities will never come again.

To show you how to understand the pupil—his needs, his likes and dislikes, his aptitudes and the workings of his mind—is the purpose of the second part of the four-fold plan of teacher training.

V

THE TEACHER

Can the Teaching Art Be Learned?—Have these busy years that have turned the world upside down in so many ways brought any new light on the methods of teaching? The business man now is hurrying from city to city by the limited trains. The physician is eagerly seeking in the hospital the latest method for healing men. The farmer is buying new machinery that will enable one man to do the work of ten. How shall the teacher of religion seek for new and best ways of approach to the human heart?

Feel your pupil's need. This lies at the very root of the matter. It is easy to see that a class of six-year-old pupils need some guidance, and yet how often we think that they grow up and become men and women just as nature framed them! Nobody is born a person. Personality is slowly achieved. It could never arise apart from social influence. Somebody draws forth the possibilities of every human soul that really achieves anything. Without this direct contact of brain with brain and heart with heart the nobler life can never be gained. Fine souls do not grow alone; they are cultivated. They are the results of older lives close to them. There are really no self-made souls, just as there are no truly self-taught pupils. Now some best possible part of the life depends upon just what you teach. That is the dignity of teaching. This influence is clearer when we stand before childhood. But you are called to teach young men or to be the guide of middle-aged people, and your mind is still the one prepared, positive, leading force in that group. You cannot

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

measure the possible development in those minds before you. You do not know what riches lie close to the surface, but whatever hidden wealth there is will come by some one's seeking it. The higher your regard for those before you, the deeper you feel the need of helping them express themselves. They will never realize their true selves without some one's aid. Why should not you be the one? Every lump of gold was brought to light by some miner's pick. Every soul was won by some one. And you know not the day nor the hour when a supreme religious opportunity lies before you.

Learn to Impart New Ideas.—Find the open door to the pupil's mind. A cotton-spinner stands before the shuttles flying too swiftly for the eye, yet somehow he brings out the well-spun cloth. You, the teacher, stand before ten or twenty flying shuttles of thought, not held in well-ordered grooves, but flying wildly in strange tangles. How are you to weave the fabric of your day's lesson from these threads? how secure attention? how persuade them all to think one thing? how bring everyone to your train of thought? Draw them together by illustration. "You tell us well enough what things are," said the plain-spoken and eager woman to the minister, "but you do not tell us what they are like." "Without a parable spake he not unto them." From the stories to beginners to the stories for the oldest students, the mind needs the challenge of imagination, of incident, of cases from real life, of something that draws it quickly to the point.

Know your message from the Bible. Have it clear and well thought out, so that it offers a plain track for the mind when once you catch the flying shuttle. Have one great

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

truth in every lesson. Believe it yourself, repeat it, look at it from many sides, review it, illustrate it, enforce it, make it so clear they cannot forget it.

Out of the Heart.—Impart yourself. Be sure you cannot tell what is not clear to you. You cannot persuade others to believe what is in doubt in your mind. Think your way through, pray until the lesson becomes yours and speak out of the authority of your own faith. This is the secret of success with so many unlearned teachers. It is the power of the positive and assured soul to impart itself. Face your doubts till you settle them in your own breast. Study your questions until you have reasonable answers. Put your lesson in order till it is clear to you, and then teach from the heart.

Need of Aim.—Dr. Chapman says: "A flippant teacher might turn a child forever against sacred things. A careless teacher might in one sentence plant in a little life a seed which would produce in after years a harvest of all that is bad, while an unsaved teacher might be the cause of the loss of a soul. At the same time, a faithful, consecrated, godly teacher might in one lesson lead a pupil to Christ, and in that one add a nation to the kingdom of God. I have in mind a missionary who has made continents glow with the glory of God, a minister who has led thousands to a better Christian experience and an evangelist who has led tens of thousands to the Master, all of these workers having been led to Christ as boys in the Sunday school, the teacher being used of God to reach them."

Would you be such a teacher? Can you make a better start than by enrolling for the course in teacher training?

VI

THE SCHOOL

A Real School.—The teacher-training class is usually the only group giving any actual study to the principles and methods guiding the Sunday school. It should on account of such study be rich in ideals and fertile in practical suggestions. It should have an immediate influence on the school at work in its own church, and outline an aggressive policy for the future. The Sunday school as an institution is now in process of rapid development and consequently in a state of constant unrest. The introduction of more strictly educational methods raises many problems. Graded schools and graded lessons cannot be reached by passing a resolution and a wave of the hand; they are gained after months and years of faithful work. The Sunday school is no longer a formless group of classes studying the same lessons; it is a school, it recognizes growth and so constant progress, it recognizes a climax and so a graduation from its earlier classes, it recognizes the training of grown Christians for service.

I. Study of Organization.—What is the form of organization most successful in the judgment of teachers of experience? There is a fair agreement now upon the requirements of a standard school. Why have these grades, departments and divisions been adopted? What is the working plan, and what is the final aim of the Sunday school?

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

1. Study the organization in a number of the best recent books and discuss freely. Keep clearly in mind the fact that religious education has a great mission and must use the best methods approved by the experience of the leaders in education.

2. Study the application in the best schools within reach by observation. Report on these to the class, and discuss.

3. Study the organization in regard to "Our School." Is it a large or small school, a city, town or country school? In what way can our school become a complete working organization, using its forces efficiently to produce the highest possible results in winning pupils to Christ and building Christian character?

In such a study the whole work from Cradle Roll to Adult Department must be carefully considered and its possibilities noted. This will often be a discovery, a work of faith rather than a description of present activities; it is both an insight and an outlook.

4. Make a special study of weak points. In the Sunday-school work as a whole certain parts have been made stronger than others. The Primary Department has been far ahead and the Intermediate Department has been the break in the line, while the Adult Department by organized classes has shown the most rapid recent development. The size of the school has shown rapid growth. There are many large schools far beyond the enrollment reported in other years. How have these advances been made? What methods have been tried and tested that we may be sure of them? For instance, the boys' classes in the Intermediate Department and boys' activities for week-day work are now holding the center of interest.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

What has been offered by the leaders in the "teen" years to produce this splendid enthusiasm and to secure such substantial results?

How are these boys' organizations related to the other departments, such as the junior, the adult, the girls' organization? Study organization in the training class, so that you will not be satisfied with a mere outline on paper, but seek the latest news from the firing line and ask how these victories can be repeated in our schools.

II. The School and the Community.—The Sunday school must be studied in its wider relation if we are to know its true dignity and its real mission.

1. How is it related to other organizations? What are the public schools teaching in morals and what is the result in the life of their pupils? In what measure are they meeting the needs of the spiritual nature? What coöperation can we have by clear understanding?

2. What other religious and charitable organizations are at work, such as the Christian Associations, the United Charities, etc.?

3. What are the conditions and influences in regard to play life, amusement, recreation for children and young people?

4. How far have the different Sunday schools united in a social survey of the community? Are they aiming to reach and teach all Protestant childhood and youth?

5. What is our school doing in trying to reach those without religious instruction? What is it doing for the larger life of the community? What is the next duty that lies open to it?

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

III. Worship.—Make a careful study of the Sunday school in regard to worship.

1. Is the opening exercise merely an introduction for the sake of calling the members together and securing quiet in the lesson period, or is it truly a time of reverent and inspiring song and prayer.

2. Study the hymns and tunes used. Are they fitted to the pupils and to the hour? Have they the spirit and loftiness of real hymns of praise?

3. Is there instruction in regard to worship, public and private, by the teachers? Do the pupils take part in the worship, or do they only look on?

4. Is there a temper and atmosphere in the school in which the teacher can instruct with a view to Christian progress in the mind of childhood, and in which we can win to Christ and develop Christian character in later years?

Finally, is our school promoting and teaching a high type of Christian manhood and womanhood?

These are only a few of the suggestive questions which ought to be asked in any class and studied with care by every group of teachers, but they indicate the constructive type of work possible in a training class.

VII

HOW TO AWAKEN INTEREST

The Need.—No one need call attention to the deficiency in the number of well-prepared teachers in the Sunday school. It is acknowledged by everyone; yet, while the need is felt, it is not fully considered. Until the work of the teacher in the school is studied more carefully by the churches there will not be any rapid increase in numbers. Until more thorough and adequate plans are laid and generously supported by the churches there cannot be any satisfactory development in the method and efficiency in teaching. The past five years have seen the Sunday school advance more than any agency of the Church, but as yet we are only at the beginning of a great movement in religious education. The teaching ministry of the Church has been left in large measure to the public school; but now, as the Bible is more and more denied place in the schools of the State, the Church must enter seriously upon the great work which belonged to it in the early centuries.

A Committee on Education.—A Committee on Education in each local church is the more effective way to make the work of training teachers thorough and permanent. This committee should be selected with care, and, with the pastor and superintendent, be charged with the care for courses of study and organization and plans for betterment of the Sunday school. Such a committee can give vigor and stability to the teacher-training class. This class is not a mere incident nor subject to the passing en-

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

thusiasm of a group; it is a part of the essential and regular organization of the school, and deserves support and encouragement from the whole authority and membership of the church.

A thoughtful Educational Committee will be aware that the training of Sunday-school teachers is the very life of the church. Three hundred thousand teachers and officers enter upon their duties anew every year in America. Upon the quality of the leadership and teaching of these beginners depends a very large part of the success or failure of the kingdom of Christ in our land. Nothing but a great and truly educational system of training will meet the demand of the day.

The local committee must coöperate with the central boards of the churches and put itself in line to promote training of the high character approved in methods and textbooks by the Sunday-school authorities of its own denomination.

The Efficiency Test.—The Educational Committee should first turn with the pastor, superintendent and teachers to a study of its own school. Let us suppose that with time and care an efficiency test like the following were applied:

1. What is the enrollment by ages and departments of our school?
2. What is the average attendance? How does it differ in ages, departments and sexes?
3. Have we a system of reports by which we can test the results of our work?
4. Are the lessons of our school fitted to the pupils in each department?

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

5. Is there a wise and careful attention to the spiritual needs of the younger pupils?

6. Is there any definite plan for instruction in Christian service and personal evangelism for the older pupils?

7. Are the teachers chosen with special regard to their fitness for the different departments?

8. Have we enough well-prepared teachers for the classes in the "teen" years?

9. Have we an adequate plan for training the prospective teachers?

10. How far is our school meeting the real needs of the community? How far are we preparing for growth?

Awakening the Church.—By such study of both the needs at large and the local conditions, a small group—the Educational Committee, the pastor and Sunday-school workers—will be brought face to face with the actual problems. They will be alive and eager for work.

Their next task is to appeal to the whole church, to awaken an educational conscience, a sense of responsibility for religious teaching. Heretofore the Sunday school itself has been left to a few willing and noble workers, and the teacher-training class has been in a corner. The school was one of the smaller interests in the church, and the training was a small interest of the Sunday school.

The training of the leaders of the church must rest upon the heart of its whole membership, and when once it is felt as a loving interest a long advance will be made. Some public presentation should be made to instruct the congregation. The pastor can preach on the new problems and new duties arising in our modern society

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

in regard to religious education. The ignorance of the Bible among high-school and college students will give him a theme. The fact that one-third of the children and youth of school age in the United States are not under any system of religious training will give him a second theme. The interest in child study, in education and in the effort to promote child welfare in the nation will suggest much for the church and its half-neglected tasks.

After the pulpit message, some clear and earnest presentation should be made to the church authorities and to the local Sunday-school Council or to a group meeting of all the workers. All these are plans to arouse interest.

But the awakened conscience of the church will come from a sense of need. The deep conviction that a great duty lies at the door may be relied upon to produce action. When the whole church once believes that it must enter upon the work of religious education as a business, then time and money and organization will come to the Sunday school as the supreme teaching and evangelistic opportunity.

The Training Class Does Not Live to Itself.—This broad foundation in strong, intelligent sentiment pervading the religious community gives dignity and permanence to the training class. It can never have a true, healthy life to itself. Treated as a good thing, it prospers for a time under some earnest individual and then declines: given deep root in the affections and convictions of the religious leaders, it is guided and inspired to make sacrifice during long weeks of preparation, it is greeted with a generous appreciation on public occasions, and its members are treated as the leaders of the Church of the future.

VIII

TRAINING THE TEACHERS OF TO-MORROW

The Class at the Sunday-school Hour.—"We shall never have enough teachers," says Frank L. Brown, "unless we begin to train them before they are eighteen." We may begin as early as fifteen at times with bright and earnest pupils. As they are ready for promotion from the Intermediate to the Senior Department the choice should be made carefully. There are many reasons why this is a favorable time. The day of rapid acquiring has come; the altruistic spirit stirs; the day of deep thoughtfulness and inquiry is at hand; leadership and service are words to conjure with; they are ready for wider range of interests and study, and they desire to manage their own organizations.

We are slow to learn the strength of these later adolescent years. The Young Men's Christian Association and the leaders in the Secondary Division work of the Sunday school unite in telling us that we can have as many younger boys in the schools as we have older boy teachers. The senior girl will often be the teacher of the younger girls and the senior boy the leader of the lads in the future, and we had better prepare for it. They are not the most skillful teachers in handling a lesson, but they are close to the week-day life, the zest and joy of the earlier teens; they can appeal to the boy and girl and win the heart because they still know the secrets of youth. They have not the wisdom of the years, but they possess the magic

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

words by which they can enter where older feet are seldom allowed to tread. Such work of young teachers must be under careful supervision and guidance, but it must be provided for if we are to save our schools from the fearful waste and loss we have suffered in the years after fourteen.

The Home School the Best Training School.—If such delicate and difficult tasks are to be the work of the young teachers, then we must begin to train them early. The Sunday school itself is the best elementary training school. Students in a class in the school are in touch with all its activities. They are in the atmosphere of work and see its problems before their eyes. They can give time more readily and regularly than at a week-day hour, and they feel that the work is not separate and peculiar, but is an advanced course of study belonging to the school itself.

The youth is always looking far away. The lure of work and college, the distant city and far-off fields are in his thoughts. If we do not begin the training for service at home, it will seldom be taken up later. But if young people are committed to definite Christian activity, if they are in training for some work which they feel fitted to do, then they are far more likely to pursue a course of study or take up active work in new surroundings.

Sometimes our faithful teachers in the country and smaller towns complain that it avails little to organize and train, because their students are lost in such numbers to the home church. But on second thought they count it a joy to contribute workers and leaders to the kingdom afar off, and to safeguard the life of the ambitious young people who go forth by binding them early to definite and congenial tasks.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

A great number of the strongest men and women in the churches to-day are only carrying out the plans they began early in some humble church. If the visions and day-dreams of youth have not the far-off fields of heroic Christian service in view, there will be few years of mature devotion to great and unselfish work.

Choice of Students.—There should be a careful selection of students for the class. It is not the duty of every bright pupil to be a teacher. The choice should be made by the officers of the school, the pastor or the committee on education. There must be a true unity of spirit in this or the work will fail. Often the class spirit runs so high, or the devotion of the teacher is so great, that the members refuse to leave an interesting class, and the teachers object to their leaving for the training-class work.

Genuine, thorough work for the upbuilding of the school will soon establish a loftier standard. In order to secure this the training class should be given such honor in the school that invitation or election to its ranks will be truly held as a promotion. An army in which none aspired to be officers would lack all pride and spirit of victory.

Personal Appeal.—The official choice of students should be followed by direct and personal appeal. The value of the study, the nature of the work expected, the confidence of the church and the opportunity for usefulness should be made plain to them. The obligation of loyalty to the church and its Master will be the true motive, and this will seldom fail to win the consent of those who have already placed Christ in the center of their hearts.

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

The Course of Study.—The course chosen must be adapted to the attainments and needs of the class. With classes of young pupils the simple outline courses will form the best beginning. With more advanced students a careful choice of text and reference reading should be made. No hard-and-fast rule should be followed in the beginning with such workers. The Bible study may be the most interesting and of first importance, or their interest in child nature or methods of teaching or organization may come first, and be followed by the Bible study later. The life of Christ may appeal to them above everything else, and they can enter upon their work by getting first into the very heart of the Bible and attacking afterwards the historical outlines of the Old Testament characters and messages. In voluntary work it is not always wise, or even possible, to follow the rules, but a fresh and eager preference by the students will go a long way in winning their interest and committing them to the work of a full course.

IX

ORGANIZATION AND ENROLLMENT

A Working Method.—When a sufficient number have agreed to join the class, then organize. Six, eight or ten form a fine study class; a larger number will have more enthusiasm and enjoy greater variety in the work. Let the class elect president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, in addition to the teacher. Thus they will be enabled to say “our class”—a very great thing gained. Let the class appoint committees on program. A committee on membership should assist in securing new members and encourage them in the beginning of their work. Secure for the classroom a curtained corner, or some place where the members may be by themselves.

Then let them have some months of uninterrupted study. Do not draw any away to do supply teaching. Let these young people have their chance to work, but do not forget them. Keep them close to the heart of the church. Let the class be known in the Sunday school by frequent recognition in the opening program; let it be known from the pulpit and in the church bulletin. Keep the mind of the whole church alive to the fact that a training class, seeking higher skill in the teaching of the Bible, is at work every week.

After full organization, and at the end of a month's work—when the list of members is complete and the new class has settled to its work—then the enrollment with denomi-

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

national or state secretary is very important, since the class should look forward to a full course and complete examinations. A diploma, given upon completion of such examinations by the denomination or the International Association, is the recognition of the long and well-spent effort.

Beginning Work.—The books approved by the various churches for the First Standard Course are books of outlines. They are clear and simple and give a basis for work. Such a course can be made a valuable foundation in the hands of a teacher and an earnest, studious class.

There should be frequent reviews, written tests and some drills in the important outlines; this will lead the student to master the contents of the book readily. But the memory method by itself comes far short of the best results. Information is gained, but it takes far more than a group of facts, however well organized, to make a teacher. The habit of study is, after all, the most valuable fruit of this work—so many teachers have been accustomed to trifle and delay in preparation. A regular and conscientious method is the foundation for success in Sunday-school teaching as a life work.

Enriching the Course.—There are a number of ways by which this course may be enriched:

1. *By Bible Study.*—The reading and study of the Bible itself should be a part of the work faithfully carried forward. It is possible to study about the Bible and not become a student of the Bible itself. No one can be a true Bible teacher who is not a constant reader and a real student of its pages.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

2. *By Reference Reading.*—The workers' library of the Sunday school, and often the town or city library, can be used for reference. A few books should be at the command of every class. The reading should be assigned by the teacher, who should always give chapter and page. A short report in writing or a verbal report should be made on important subjects. The assignment can be made according to the interest of the students. The teacher should be careful to ask for a report and see that the reference reading is actually done.

3. *By Encouraging and Directing Observation by the Students.*—They should keep eyes and ears open, and study the characteristics of children and older boys and girls. The play life and the week-day activities of the different ages can be studied and discussed in the class. Some students will be interested most in the young child, some in the older child, some in those of the "teen" years. All should bring the result of their quickened observation to the class.

4. *By Story-telling.*—The fine art of story-telling should be cultivated by the teachers. The elementary teachers are called especially to be expert story-tellers. To come to see vividly with the mind's eye, to describe with short, swift words leading to a climax, is a part of the craftsmanship of the true teacher for all ages. Practice in the selection and adaptation of stories may be made one of the most delightful and helpful features of the training class.

5. *By Observation of Good Teaching.*—The students should be permitted in time to visit classes in the different departments and in different schools. They should make careful notes, and on the following Sunday discuss the

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

characteristics of the pupils and special points of interest in the teaching.

6. *By Practice Teaching.*—At the end of the course some teaching may be done by students under teachers of experience, or as supply teachers. But the students should make careful report to the class, telling the difficulties, the age and the characteristics of the pupils, the questions asked, the stories told, the aim of the lesson and the result of the lesson expected in life of pupils.

7. *By the Graded Lessons.*—These should be used as illustrating the fitting lessons for each age, and in the method of presentation by the teacher. They should be kept at hand for reference constantly; the introductions and forewords of the books for the different years are of especial value. Familiarity with the graded system is one of the essential qualifications for every young teacher.

X

THE CLASS OF TEACHERS

Advanced Work.—The second demand, after the prospective teachers have been provided for, is training for the teachers already at work. They are busy folks, interested in many important matters and carrying other work for the church, but a large number of them will give time for preparation and class work if only it be made worth while.

The mistake has often been made in presenting work that was too elementary in treatment. The alert teachers of experience are ready for more advanced books. They must be challenged to think; they want wider range of information, but they especially desire concrete and accurate directions in methods of teaching and management. They are facing the hard problems of the school. They hear much of the movements in the Sunday-school work and they want the best. The appeal to a higher sense of duty and the noble pride in successful work will avail far more than a promise to make the studies short and easy.

The Time.—The time question is always the first one to answer, and there is but one solution: consecration of a definite portion of time to teaching, and preparation for teaching must be made. There must be an offering of time as unto God—a sacred tithe of one's energy, an investment of influence set aside for his use. Men and women who have stores, shops, farms, offices, homes and many

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

demands of time and strength are to-day punctual and well-prepared students in hundreds of classes.

It is not a question of leisure at all, but of the estimate in which the teacher's calling is held. Whenever the true dignity and high calling of the teacher of religion comes home to the heart, then the time is found. If the cost be great, the element of sacrifice will lift it above the trifling and commonplace.

The Teacher.—Many of the classes are taught by pastors. Some pastors hold it a privilege to teach either a class of young students in preparation or a group of teachers already enlisted. Such work keeps the pastor close to the life problems of people and it gives to the preacher a view of the religious needs of childhood and youth that is priceless for the pulpit. This is true only in case the pastor is an open-minded student of child nature, is willing to lead discussions, to read books, be a student of the Sunday-school problems and restrain the preaching habit in the class. Teachers of the public schools, high schools and colleges, trained in normal methods, are rendering a great service to the Sunday school and its teachers, and many more stand ready to answer the call when the study is lifted to a standard that commands their respect and demands their skill.

The Advanced Course.—Advanced courses of study have been published by the leading denominations, and these courses have been approved by the Committee on Education of the International Association. The minimum time is two years, unless the work be taken in an institution of learning, and each of these courses is out-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

lined as a three-year course of study. Many of the books of these courses are the product of scholarship in Bible study, and all are expositions of the best methods of modern education.

Works of such character can best be taken up by organization of study groups and selection of a teacher fitted to the particular subject. For instance, in these courses one of the books that meets favor with educators is "The Pupil and the Teacher" by Professor Weigle. Select a book like this for six months' study. Secure the attendance, by personal solicitation, of as large a number of teachers as possible. Do not wait for all; even a small group may do fine work. Then find a teacher whose first interest and information is the psychology of childhood and adolescence, and spend three months at least on "The Pupil." If an examination is desired, a sectional certificate will be given, with credit toward advanced diploma. Perhaps another teacher should be chosen for the next section—the study of "The Teacher." For the Bible study another teacher may be found who is the best leader for Old Testament or New Testament.

The Committee on Education of the local church should supervise and encourage an advanced class, as some guidance and organization are essential to maintain the interest and to care for details of work week by week. In a large class organization on the adult class plan will be the most effective.

The Class at Work.—*1. Reference Reading.*—This should be done with a far wider range of books than in a class of younger students. Each member of the class should be provided with a notebook, and should be en-

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

couraged to buy a few books for himself, only, however, on careful selection. Report of pages and chapters read as assigned by the teacher should be made in the reader's own words, and discussion should be encouraged.

2. *Short Theme Writing.*—This should be a regular part of the work. With reference reading and discussion this will not be difficult, as there will soon appear many living topics upon which the class is forming its own opinions.

3. *Teaching How to Study.*—The waste of time in fruitless study must be considered. Aim to get to the heart of a book, and express it in a few paragraphs. Let the teacher in assigning the lesson give a preview, and indicate what is the central thought and suggest what is to be expected from the lesson. He can thus economize time of students and focus the attention on important points. Let the teacher urge definite allotment of time for work. Study how to use a Bible dictionary; learn the use of maps and stereoscopes. A direct object in view is the best incentive to study. A wealth of material from books and observation will be brought into the class when the subject is a live one to its members, and they are guided in research and called upon for expression and reports.

4. *The Topical Method.*—Pass from questions to the topical method. This cannot be done at first, but after a time, when the members of the class learn to express themselves and grow in confidence, they will delight in taking up themes and putting the ideas in their own language.

5. *Study of Their Own Teaching.*—The class should be given a report form with blanks for study of their own

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

classes, and should make a report to the training class for discussion. This should include some description of age, numbers and characteristics of pupils, lesson taught, plan of lesson by teacher, method of securing attention, some questions asked, some of the difficulties, stories told, aim of teaching and result.

6. *Story-telling and Character Study*.—Five to eight minutes may be used frequently for story-telling, but no story should be offered to the class without careful preparation by the teller. The analysis and description of characters selected from the Bible, Christian history and the heroes of Christian service to-day will be found an attraction for the training of leaders of classes of all ages. Story-telling is an art that demands practice and needs criticism and guidance.

7. *Reports*.—Reports on classes and schools visited for observation should be given, with suggestions of best ideas gained. Conventions, institutes, schools of methods attended by members should be reported from notebooks for fresh suggestions.

8. *General Suggestions*.—The following suggestions, from Professor George A. Coe, if carefully followed will prove invaluable to the class:

(a) Let every meeting be a religious meeting. Open with prayer. Appeal constantly to religious motives, to the end that consecration may grow deeper as well as more intelligent. Aim to awaken ambition to be a skillful worker in the church.

(b) Always discuss the reports. You must be attentive and responsive to your class as well as the class to you.

(c) Always call for quotations, or points, from the reading.

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

(d) Secure discussion of everything. See that every member answers questions.

(e) Begin and close on time. Don't dawdle. Plan each meeting so that the work will be done by the end of the hour without hurry.

9. *Adaptation.*—Adapt yourself and the lessons to your class at any cost. Leave out, insert, modify wherever necessary. Don't attempt to make too many points in a lesson hour, but make your central point stand out. Don't be ashamed to say "I don't know."

XI

THE CITY TRAINING SCHOOL

Specialization.—Much of the study in the classes connected with the local churches will be devoted to the general questions that are common to all Sunday-school teachers and Bible students. It is difficult to plan for special studies because the teachers of the different ages are all together, or else the group is a small one chosen from one department and the other departments are not interested. Often the class is made up entirely of girls and the study is devoted entirely to the primary pupils, and the result is a one-sided development of the school. The Elementary Division is charged with enthusiasm and teachers are using the best lessons and bringing the fruits of the study of new books, careful plans, and training-class methods to their classes. But often there is no like skill or organization for the years beyond. The older boys have not been enlisted for teaching, the younger men have not been in training for officers and leaders, and the falling away after the junior years is watched in helpless despair because no teachers and leaders have been provided for classes above the elementary years.

There can be some training of specialists in a class of new recruits, but it can only be of a suggestive nature; there is little time for careful attention to one problem of teaching when all are present. Now the day has come for setting aside teachers according to their talents, and training them to do the one thing they can best do.

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

The local church does not have the members or teachers for such division of activities. How shall the work be done?

The Aim.—This is a night school of religion for the study of Sunday-school problems and methods of increasing its efficiency by teaching and better organization. Its primary object is to train leaders and open classes for special departments and grades for more thorough study than can be followed in the classes of a single church.

Organization.—The school, or institute, is usually organized by calling together representatives of as many churches as are willing to coöperate in the betterment of the Sunday school by careful education in modern methods. The Ministers' Union, The City Sunday-school Association or The Superintendents' Union, The Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association and kindred organizations are asked to unite in improving and sustaining the city school.

A Council formed from representatives of each church meets once a quarter to determine the general policy, elect a principal, who shall have charge of the school, and a small Executive Committee. This committee chooses the corps of teachers; the principal directs the working of the school week by week.

The School at Work.—More than a score of such training schools were working successfully in 1913. By the end of the year this type of school had passed beyond the experimental stage, and proved itself a practical solution of the difficult problem of lifting and maintaining

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

the standards of graded and departmental Sunday-school instruction.

A central church, or suitable building, is chosen for the regular meeting place. Two periods of forty-five minutes each, for one evening a week, during at least thirty weeks of the year, is the plan usually adopted.

The teachers are found in the public schools and colleges, and among the ministers and other studious and successful religious leaders of the city. There is seldom difficulty in securing a faculty with scholarship and teaching skill. The choice of necessity must be made with great care. Only teachers able to sustain interest and offer a superior type of lesson can keep the attendance of their classes, as the members are present to secure some information of a special sort, or, even more, to discover better methods in teaching and receive training in them. They will not attend regularly unless the teaching is thorough, practical and well adapted, unless they themselves are made students and working partners in the class.

The First Hour.—The first period of forty-five minutes should be a general assembly hour. It should be opened with a moment of worship, the faculty being seated in a group on the platform. The period may be devoted to a section of Bible study—historical outlines, character study or messages of the books—or to the problems of Sunday-school organization, gradation, management, etc., or the study of child nature and the methods of teaching. Or, again, there may be textbook study presented by some teacher of ability, with outline method and use of notebooks.

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

The value of this hour is in fellowship. There should be a strong bond of unity among the Sunday-school workers, a high sense of comradeship and joy in the common work. This truly professional spirit can only come by intimate acquaintance given by frequent meeting with the great common aim in view. A survey of the community problems from the standpoint of the Sunday school can be made inspiring and effective in such an hour. The members of this unified company, joined in prayer and song, see Protestant childhood and youth of the city as their field of service, and the magnitude and difficulty of the task before them unites them in one company and binds them together as soldiers on a common battle field.

The Second Hour.—The classes should meet in separate classrooms. A carefully chosen teacher should be in charge of each class. Time—forty-five minutes. There should be a moment of worship in each class.

The classes should be divided as follows whenever the enrollment is large enough:

Elementary

Teachers of Beginners Classes.

Teachers of Primary Classes.

Teachers of Junior Classes.

Secondary

Teachers of Boys' Classes.

Teachers of Girls' Classes.

Teachers of Senior Classes.

Adult

Teachers of Men's Classes.

Teachers of Women's Classes.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

There should be also a coaching class for teachers of training classes, a class in methods of missionary instruction and a class in methods of temperance instruction.

Bible study in Old and New Testaments.

Each class should use a textbook with reference reading. There should be discussions of reports and theme writing. The books for text and reference work should be of the more thorough and accurate type—the best that can be found for each department.

Two or Three Terms.—The work may be divided into three terms to good advantage—twelve weeks in the fall, ten weeks in winter and ten in spring, or it may be divided into two terms, beginning in October and completing first term in midwinter, with a vacation time at Christmas. There may be a reorganization at the beginning of the second term, and the work may be completed with some public exercise in the late spring. This would allow change of texts and subjects, and would give time for recruiting classes and winning new students.

The number of classes can be graduated according to the enrollment. In some of the cities the enrollment has been two hundred and more, and there have been twelve and fourteen classes busy at work during the second period; in other cities, with smaller enrollment, only four or five classes can be organized to advantage. The large numbers are a splendid encouragement and give strength and an inspiring evidence of success, but smaller numbers may work with equal thoroughness and efficiency.

This plan for giving system and common strength to the work of religious education is not for the large city alone; the smaller city or town may use this method with the

THE TEACHER-TRAINING CLASS

same profit; in fact, the larger city is the more difficult field. But the smaller city and the towns carry out their work with equal value, if only the leadership and unity of spirit are available. Fifty who will enroll with a pledge of fidelity in their hearts can give their own schools a higher educational rating and their own lives the joy that comes from a new vision in successful labor for the kingdom. The fresh impulse from new books, counsel and study with fellow workers will give a zest to many a tired teacher and new courage to many a lagging leader.

A Businesslike Method.—The plans for such a city school or institute should be laid long in advance. Some weeks should be devoted to the selection of teachers, the enrollment of students, the awakening of interest and the completion of organization.

The enrollment can best be secured by personal appeal. The few who are leaders can find some one in each of the different Sunday schools who will secure names of teachers and officers in his own school. A diligent preliminary survey and canvass insure a solid and reliable working organization.

A large measure of the success or failure rests in the choice of a principal. With a leader of commanding enthusiasm and wide vision, a noble contribution may be made to the Sunday-school life of any city.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

VIII

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

BY

REV. E. MORRIS FERGUSSON



THE HOME DEPARTMENT

I

WHAT THE HOME DEPARTMENT IS

Definition.—The Home Department is a department of the Sunday school which seeks to enroll those who feel unable to attend regularly, and yet are willing to study the lessons and have a part in the membership and work of the school.

Aim.—It aims to extend the regular study of God's Word and the Christian fellowship of the Sunday school, church and congregation. It furnishes the pastor and the parish with a corps of helpers called visitors, who visit the Home Department members at least once a quarter under the direction of a Home Department superintendent.

Results.—Through this simple enrollment, visitation and Bible study, with occasional special gatherings and invitations, many members of church families take up or resume regular Bible study, to their great personal profit. Many families and individuals, also, who previously were outside of church influences, are interested and ultimately secured as regular attendants upon the pulpit and school services of the church. Children become more regular in attendance upon the Sunday school and know their lessons better through their parents'

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

greater interest in their lesson work. Cases of spiritual and material destitution are found and reported. The aged and the "shut-in" greatly appreciate the church's attention and the privilege of fellowship in Bible study. The whole church membership, so far as not in attendance upon the Sunday school, may be thus enrolled, and will be the better for a definite line of Bible work.

The Home Department is a valuable feeder to the main Sunday school. The fear sometimes expressed that some will take the easy, stay-at-home method of discharging their Sunday-school obligations provided by the department is not realized in experience, but rather the contrary. Abundant testimony can be furnished on this point by anyone familiar with the Home Department in its practical workings. People go where they are interested; and those previously indifferent frequently become so interested in the lessons as to leave the Home Department to become members of some class in the school. Teachers and other workers are sometimes secured in this way. One superintendent realized how well the department in her charge was doing its work when an examination of the roll showed that all but two of the members had become attendants of the main school. Superintendents and visitors find that they must be continually active if they would supply the places of those who leave in this way.

Who Can Do It.—As the work of both the superintendent and the visitors is done outside of the Sunday-school hour, and is yet closely connected therewith, there is nothing to prevent teachers and other active workers from taking up Home Department work in addition to their present duties. Indeed, many teachers

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

of large classes find that the charge of a group of members, including some of the parents of their own pupils, adds little to their present duties, and is rather a help than a burden. On the other hand, in most large fields, and even in some small ones, there are willing, capable and consecrated workers quietly waiting for some one to discover their capabilities and intrust them with responsibility. The Home Department service is admirably fitted for bringing out these silent ones; and hundreds who a few years ago had nothing to do in the Church are now actively and helpfully at work as Home Department superintendents and visitors.

What the Work Is Like.—The work to be done is simple enough. Each member is given a lesson quarterly and a record envelope, on which he marks each week the fact that he has studied the lesson for at least half an hour, and in which he places such contribution as he would make if attending Sunday school. At the end of the calendar quarter the visitors call upon the members in their respective groups or districts, receive their envelopes, give out the new envelopes and lesson quarterlies, learn of their welfare and interest in the work, and report the result of their visitation to the Home Department superintendent. The individual visitor may add to this outline whatever friendly and Christian neighborliness is in her heart; may use the quarter's Bible lessons as a leading topic with which to open up a conversation on spiritual things; and will always report to the pastor any fact that he should know.

The outfit for the work includes a supply of circulars, record envelopes, report blanks, etc., with Home De-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

partment lesson quarterlies enough to supply all the prospective members. This involves an outlay at the start of two or three dollars for a field of moderate size. With the close of the first quarter the members' quarterly contributions begin to come in, and the almost universal experience is that the receipts more than cover all expenses. It is hard to convince the people in most communities that the whole thing is not another scheme to raise money; and so the visitors are generally instructed to emphasize the fact that offerings are purely voluntary, and only such as the member would give as a matter of course if he were present in the Sunday school. Yet even so, most churches find that a well-managed Home Department, instead of being an expense, is a steady and substantial source of revenue.

The work has received the hearty indorsement of the leading denominations. It is all strictly local, under the oversight of the pastor and the church authorities, is equally necessary in city and country fields and has been abundantly blessed whenever faithfully tried.

Begin Now.—It is easy at the outset to organize a force to begin the work; and the value and helpfulness are so obvious, and the joys of service are so many, that little trouble is found in maintaining and enlarging the department when once begun.

II

HOW TO BEGIN

MOST Home Departments start with the enthusiasm and enterprise of one person. If you, reader, are ready, with God's help, to be that person, then the first thing for you to do is to learn about the Home Department and to familiarize yourself with the pieces of printed matter which experience has shown to be necessary to good and permanent work.

What Supplies Are Needed.—Procure a set of samples of Home Department literature. The principal printed tools are the lesson quarterly, the record envelope, the visitor's record, the visitor's quarterly report and the superintendent's record book. The envelope has spaces for marking the member's weekly lesson study, visits to Sunday school and contributions. The visitor's record provides space for a list of the names and addresses of the visitor's so-called "class" or group of members, with columns for a year's record of the work, by quarters.

Other supplies frequently used are: a circular describing the Home Department, the duties of members, etc., for distribution in church and by the visitors; a pledge card, to secure the member's pledge to study the lesson for not less than one-half hour a week; a certificate of membership or recognition card, to be given the new member upon en-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

rollment (occasionally useful in large departments); a blank form for the Home Department superintendent's quarterly report to the Sunday school; a book or blank in which to record the results of the canvass for new members; a credential, button or badge for the Home Department messenger.

Starting.—With the literature before you showing the plan of work, sit down and realize to yourself the necessity for doing such work as this in your field. Consider, not what your Sunday school and church are doing already, but what they are leaving undone. Think not of the difficulties to be encountered in starting a new work in a field where the laborers are too few for the work already undertaken, but rather of what the Lord has helped you and others to do in the past, under circumstances similarly discouraging. Recall the many reports and testimonials that have been printed from schools like yours that have tried the work and been blest therein. Pray for the needs in your field. If somebody's heart does not burn, your Home Department will not amount to much, even if you go through the form of starting it.

Talk over the movement with pastor and superintendent and with a few of your friends. Arouse interest, pass around your information, explain details of operation, meet objections, secure promises of coöperation.

Now have the superintendent or the pastor bring the matter before a meeting of the session or the board chosen to look after the work of the Sunday school. Present the plan in its general purpose and its details, exhibit the sample literature and secure a vote approving the plan and providing for carrying it into operation.

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

Getting Under Way.—Different Sunday schools will find different ways of going to work. Sometimes the way will be clear to elect the Home Department superintendent at once, with authority to order lesson quarterlies and printed matter, and to appoint and send out the visitors on the preliminary canvass. Sometimes it is best for the meeting to appoint a committee on organization, made up of those who will prove good workers when the organization is complete. This committee should study the literature and the field, prepare a list of families and individuals to be invited to join the department and make up an estimate of the printed supplies necessary, if these have not already been ordered. Action should not be delayed merely for the sake of conforming to somebody's method of organization; nor, on the other hand, should the work go forward too fast to permit of the enlisting and educating of the necessary helpers.

The defect of much that is called Home Department organization has come just here. Some one faithful worker understands the plan so well and is so willing to work that the rest are only too glad to appoint him or her (generally her), and give her full authority to go ahead and do everything. The result is that the work done is good as far as it goes, but does not go farther or last longer than the work of that one; and it becomes less easy each quarter to divide the field among various hands. The time to avoid this mistake is at the beginning.

In some fields, especially where there is a hesitancy about organizing for fear no members will be secured, the leaflets and envelopes may be distributed in Sunday school, the work explained and the pupils asked to urge their parents to join. The prompt response usually secured by

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

this method reassures the doubting leaders, makes it necessary to do something at once and furnishes a good start for the work of the preliminary canvass; and this much may be done with no organization at all.

The order for supplies should be sent in as soon as authority is granted to form the department, in order that, as soon as the visitors are appointed, the work may be ready for them.

Canvassing for Members.—The first work after choosing the superintendent is to secure capable visitors for the preliminary canvass. These should be chosen with care, as one or two injudicious canvassers might easily spoil the whole plan. The next step is to secure as members of the Home Department persons not now members of the Sunday school, who will agree to study the Sunday-school lesson for at least half an hour a week, keeping a record of their lesson study upon the envelope to be provided and making such contribution as they feel disposed to make as members of the Sunday school.

In order that the canvass may be systematic and complete, a list should be prepared of all persons in the community who may properly be invited to join. This list can best be prepared by a committee of those who know the field, including the superintendent, the pastor and the newly appointed Home Department superintendent. Where necessary, the roll of the Sunday school and of the church should be carefully gone over, especially the primary roll. The list should begin with the church officers and members not in the Sunday school, and should include the regular and occasional attendants at church, the non-church-going parents of Sunday-school children,

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

invalids, those employed by institutions, railroads and other companies whose requirements interfere with church duties, and absent members on the church roll.

Call the visitors together and divide up this list in the most effective way. Sometimes it is best to divide the parish at the start into districts, giving each district to one canvasser. But there are always people who are better reached by some than by others; and it is generally best, if district lines are drawn at all at this time, to follow them loosely, assigning a name rather to the one best qualified to secure that person's consent to join. The need of well-defined districts will come later in the work, when watch must be kept over the field, and when the convenience of the visitor in calling must be considered.

The canvassers must be supported by a vigorous campaign of advertising, so that the people may learn something about the work and be ready, when the visitor calls, to learn more. Let the pastor preach on the duty of Bible study, explaining briefly the new movement in the congregation, and urging all not connected with the Sunday school to join. Let the Sunday-school superintendent explain the work and ask the pupils to invite their parents to join. It may be well to distribute circulars in the pews or at the church door, where many brief but valuable interviews can be secured. A paragraph or two in the local paper may not come amiss. The real work of securing members, however, is generally done through personal visits to the homes; and frequently two or three visits are necessary to find the person at home, overcome objections and secure the member's name. This is a condition of the canvass, and should be agreed to by those who take the names.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

As the directions on the printed helps generally state, the visitor is to go armed with a supply of record envelopes and lesson quarterlies, possibly also with certificates of membership, invitation or recognition cards or other literature used; and as soon as a member is secured, he should be supplied with the means for beginning work at once. The names and addresses of all members thus secured, with remarks, should be turned over in writing to the Home Department superintendent. This completes the preliminary canvass.

III

THE WORK OF EACH QUARTER

Forming the Groups.—The preliminary canvass to secure members of the Home Department is a fine test of the staying quality of the visitors and of their capacity for the work. Some who confidently asked for a long list of names to canvass will come back with a surprisingly large proportion of refusals, or with only part of the list visited; while in other cases every name will be secured and the canvasser will ask for more.

The superintendent having received the entire list of new members, should then proceed to form them into groups, frequently but misleadingly called "classes." Each group should be carefully adapted to the capacity and convenience of the visitor who is to care for it. As far as possible, especially in the country, the parish should be divided into territorial districts; but this districting should be strictly subordinate to the wise grouping of the names, and it is generally best not to advertise it, lest exceptions and transfers should give rise to talk. If every member knows who his visitor is, and every visitor has his list of members, the superintendent can alter his plan of districts at will. Absent members, to be reached by correspondence, are sometimes grouped together under a "correspondence visitor"; sometimes given to those visitors who know them best.

The good superintendent will always be on the lookout for material for new visitors, and will be preparing a fresh group of members, old and new, to be assigned to the next

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

new visitor secured. One or more capable substitutes, also, will be needed every quarter in large departments to canvass the groups belonging to sick or absent visitors.

Groups should vary greatly in size; some visitors have all they can do to take care of five or six members, while others seem able to handle twenty or even thirty satisfactorily. Large groups, however, should not be made at the outset, as the groups of the more efficient visitors will tend to increase in size. From six to twelve members to a visitor is a good range. The visitor with a conveyance at command will, of course, take the more distant homes.

The Quarterly Supplies.—As the last Sunday of the quarter draws near the superintendent should see that the Home Department lesson quarterlies for the coming quarter are secured by the school secretary and placed in his hands for distribution; also that his supply of envelopes and other necessities is sufficient for the quarter's needs. Publishers try to fill promptly the eleventh-hour orders that come in on Saturdays just at noon; but it does not pay to take such chances. Buy in quantity, and keep an ample stock on hand.

To meet the constant complaint of visitors that the members lose their envelopes, a plan used in many large departments is for the superintendent to paste the envelope into the quarterly, tipping the end opposite the flap so that it can readily be torn loose when called for by the visitor. This also adds to the convenience of the visitor in distributing her supplies. It is hardly safe to leave this pasting to the visitors; some will attend to it, others will not.

Every envelope before being given out should have

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

written upon it by the visitor the member's name, the year and quarter, the visitor's name (and address, if needed) and the name of the Sunday school. The latter may be placed on the whole supply of envelopes with a rubber stamp, thus saving much labor to the visitors.

Sending Out the Visitors.—The supplies being in hand and in condition for distribution, the superintendent, before making up the visitors' bundles, should next go carefully over his alphabetical roll of members, and also over his roll of members by groups, to see what items of information need to be supplied and what personal messages the visitor should be asked to carry. These should be noted on slips of paper, so that each visitor may have, with her supplies, exact instructions as to her special duties. If the pastor and Sunday-school superintendent have any plans on foot for anniversaries or special meetings during the coming quarter to which it is desirable to invite the Home Department members, such invitations may be conveniently sent out through the visitors at this time. Personal, face-to-face invitations, indeed, are so much more effective than written ones, to say nothing of the pulpit notices sometimes relied on, that it is well worth while to fix the time of such gatherings with reference to their being announced by the visitors on their rounds.

On Sunday or Monday of the last week in the calendar quarter a meeting of the visitors should be called for some convenient hour and place, at which the superintendent may give out the bundles of supplies, each with its slip of personal instructions, and may supplement these instructions with verbal conference. The visitor's bundle will include quarterlies and envelopes for all her members,

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

a blank for the visitor's quarterly report, and, at the beginning of the year, a visitor's book or card with the revised list of members belonging to that group written in. This quarterly meeting is also a convenient time to discuss plans for the work of the department, and to inspire the visitors with fresh courage, higher ideals and renewed dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit. The pastor should be invited; and if he realizes the extent to which these visitors can help him in his parochial work, he will seldom fail to be there, whether himself a visitor or not.

The visitors then start out upon their visitation. It is important that this be completed within the week; otherwise some members will not have their quarterlies in time for the study of the first Sunday's lesson. It is also important that real visits be paid. Interviews and messages may perhaps suffice occasionally and in an emergency; but the friendly, Christian visit is part of the work, and is usually highly prized, especially by the shut-in members. "I live all the time in anticipation of the next hour with my Home Department visitor, and for weeks after that hour I think of what has been said to me," is the appreciative message of one member who is so crippled by rheumatism that she cannot leave her chair. And there are thousands like her.

As soon as the last member's envelope has been secured, the visitor is ready to make her quarterly report, having first entered on her "visitor's card" or in her "visitor's book" the record of each member for the quarter.

The Visitor's Report.—The visitor's quarterly report must always be in writing. No department can be sys-

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

tematically and effectively run where this is not insisted on. The report should include the names of members in the group, names and addresses of new members secured and a statement opposite each name of the number of lessons studied, times present (if at all) in Sunday school, amount of contribution and date of the visitor's visit, or the fact, indicated by a check mark, that such visit was duly paid. All other items of interest, as the reason for withdrawal or non-study of lessons, change of address, transfer to main school, with class joined, etc., should be fully stated. These things should be reported verbally to the superintendent, as he may want to ask questions; and if the report is also filed in writing, it will be there to refresh his memory when the time comes to act on the information secured. The report should be rendered promptly, that is, within two weeks from the beginning of the quarterly visitation.

Careful superintendents, who desire to deal with every member as an individual, will insist on the visitor's returning the envelopes with the quarterly report. The marks on these tell many things not shown by the quarterly tabulation, and the superintendent should scrutinize them whenever there is either faultiness or ground for question in the records of visitor or member. They need not, however, be preserved after the quarterly count is made up; nor is there any rule, other than convenience, as to whether or not they shall be returned unopened.

The Member's Report.—Much difficulty is often found in inducing some of the members to keep their weekly record and to have the envelope ready for the visitor's call. Patience, tact and careful explanation of the need for full records will sooner or later bring most of the care-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

less members into line. Where the faulty record or the visitor's report seems to indicate that the member thinks he can atone for neglect of Bible study by a good and regular contribution, he should be first warned and then dropped. The Home Department must faithfully perform its own work, make good its published terms of membership and avoid any trespass upon the field of other church agencies. It cannot do this if it consents to be a mere collector of contributions.

One successful Home Department worker has met the difficulty of non-reporting members by the use of a small pink slip,¹ which she attaches to the new quarterly to be given to the member whose report for the previous quarter was not secured. The slip conveys a simple and courteous request from the department superintendent for a complete report, to be ready each quarter when the visitor calls. This gentle rebuke is taken good-naturedly, and usually effects its purpose.

The Messenger Service.—In many departments it has been found helpful to have a corps of messenger boys, appointed from the regular attendants at Sunday school, who assist the visitors in communicating with their members between the quarterly visits. A messenger should never be sent, however, as a substitute for the visitor's periodical calls. It has been found that judicious use of the boys in this way has helped to develop their manliness and readiness to serve, so that in later years they become invaluable workers in church and Sunday school.

It should be such a difficult matter to secure an appoint-

¹ These slips will be furnished by the Westminster Press free of charge.

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

ment as messenger that the boys will apply for the post, instead of waiting to be begged to serve. The use of a badge or button and the adoption and enforcement of a simple code of regulations will be found helpful. Desire to be appointed to such an honorable position has led some boys to give up bad habits. In one school the messenger service is made attractive by the reading out on Rally Day of the names of those who have done satisfactory work during the year, with a statement of the work done. Then the boys are asked to stand while the superintendent speaks a few sentences of appreciation.

In many instances visitors have found the messengers most helpful—sometimes in unexpected ways. Mrs. Flora V. Stebbins, in "The Home Department of To-day," has told of a visitor who was eager to get a certain influential man as a member, but feared to ask him. Then, to her surprise, her messenger—to whom she had never spoken of her desire—told her that the man would like to join the department. The diplomatic way in which his application was secured was learned by inquiry. The sequel was that the new member became a careful Bible student and died a Christian man. For this change in his life he thanked the messenger who had led him into the Home Department.

IV

BUILDING UP THE MEMBERSHIP

Keep Your Promise.—In canvassing for Home Department members, the Sunday school makes a definite pledge that the person joining will be treated as a member of the school and invited to all special occasions. It is the duty of the Home Department superintendent to see that this pledge is not forgotten by the superintendent and the school.

At Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, the annual picnic or excursion and all other special times the plans should include an invitation to the Home Department members and provision for seating, welcoming and interesting those who attend. Pulpit and desk notices may be given, but should not be depended upon. A notice by mail or messenger, or a personal invitation by the visitor, must be sent to each member if all are to be reached; and the extra trouble is well worth taking, as it assures the members that the church's interest in them is more than a matter of form. If candy, ice cream or other substantial favors are to be dispensed, the Home Department members should receive their share.

Socials.—Socials for the members are held by many progressive departments. They help the members to realize how many others are studying with them each week, and tend to bring members and visitors into closer relation. For the same reason the roll of members should,

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

in a large department, be printed and circulated once a year.

In planning a Home Department social, a worker of experience offers this advice: "By all means make the meeting an exclusive occasion for members of the Home Department only; otherwise it loses its value as a favor extended to them. Have a bright and interesting program, with a brief address by the pastor, not longer than ten minutes. This limit should also apply to any other addresses. After the brief formal exercises, have a social hour and serve light refreshments, which may be in the name of the visitors. The social should be held early in the quarter, so that the visitors may carry the invitations with them on their rounds."

The company that is usually drawn together by these invitations is not easy to handle socially. Compared with the visitors' hopes, the attendance will seem small, and the ice will be hard to break. No pains should be spared, therefore, to make the meeting place especially cozy, chatty and unconventional. The members may be met at the door, not merely with a greeting, but with some device like a numbered question to which must be found the numbered answer, compelling the newcomer to move around and get acquainted. The program throughout should be full, bright and varied. The leaders of the Sunday school should be invited and urged to attend.

New Members.—The law that things that stand still go backward applies to the Home Department. The superintendent must never relax the effort for new members. As soon as each quarterly visitation is over and the quarterly report complete, a quiet effort for new members

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

should begin. The pastor, the primary teacher and all others who visit in the church's field should be working in the interest of the Home Department. The visitors, of course, will lose no opportunity to pick up and report a new member. Special efforts may be made from time to time, such as a house-to-house canvass of the field, a call on the Sunday-school teachers for lists of the parents represented in their classes or the sending of an envoy to the fire company, the police station or the car barn. If a hospital or other institution is in the vicinity, the nurses and attendants should be looked after. No year should pass without at least one concerted and definite movement all along the line for new Home Department members.

Absent Church Members.—Absent members on the church roll are a serious problem to the conscientious pastor, especially in a church that ministers to a moving population like that of a manufacturing or a railroad town. People move away, and then insist on retaining their membership in the old church, regardless of the rules which most if not all denominations have made as to loss of standing through absence. The Home Department plan gives the pastor, or a correspondence visitor duly appointed, an excellent reason for writing to such people and requesting them to become studying, reporting and contributing members of the Home Department. If they will not do this, they cannot reasonably complain at being dropped from the church roll; if they do, the church regularly hears from them and receives their gifts; and the study of the uniform Bible lessons arouses fresh interest in the services of the church nearest them, and usually

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

leads to a call for their letters and a transfer of membership. Or, if the absence is temporary, as of a young man away at study or in a position, the quarterly letter from the visitor asking for a report insures the keeping up of connection with his old church and school. Some departments tell of soldier members in the Philippines and other distant stations, whose Sunday-school connection and duties are a potent force to keep them true amid hardships and temptations.

Foreigners.—The rapid increase in immigration makes it more needful than ever that we should care spiritually for the stranger within our gates. Few American fields to-day are without some families who speak and read a foreign tongue. Although many of these are Roman Catholic, this need not be assumed in advance; and even so, the Christian visitor, with a smile, an invitation and a Bible lesson help and magazine in the old familiar tongue, will seldom fail of a courteous welcome; while among the school children an interpreter, if needed, can readily be found. The enterprising department will reconnoiter its field to ascertain the extent and character of its foreign-reading population, and will then seek to supply itself with lesson literature in the language called for, charging the first expense to its missionary work. The secretary of the state or provincial Sunday-school association can usually ascertain from international headquarters where any required foreign literature can be procured. When these people have once been enlisted as friends, they will want to pay for all that is given them; but the call to contribute should be suppressed with more than usual care during the canvass.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Newcomers.—One advantage of having the field restricted is in the "lookout" work that the visitors can thus do in finding and promptly calling upon new families moving in. Until these are known to be of another church connection, any church covering that field may and should seek to take them under its care. In some city fields this work is done with system and exactness; monthly or even weekly reports are made, and card indexes are kept that show the church relationship of every family within the bounds of the parish. If this work is needed, the Home Department organization can readily be expanded to cover it, either alone or in conjunction with other churches.

The Record.—The superintendent's record is an important factor in that steady pushing of the work without which it will surely become an old story and begin to decline. Neither the memory nor a mere file of report blanks will suffice as a basis of information. The superintendent should have a carefully prepared record book, arranged to receive all the information that will or may afterwards be needed, and no more. The need for information in good shape is felt (1) when a report of the work is called for; (2) when a group is to be transferred to a new visitor or rearranged; (3) when a special canvass for new members is to be instituted; (4) when the superintendency is transferred to another. Every quarter's visitation, in fact, brings the need of a well-kept record to refer to.

Several forms of Home Department record book are on the market, any one of which can be adapted, more or less conveniently, to the needs of the ordinary department.

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

The essential requirements of such a book are that it shall provide for (a) a list of districts and visitors; (b) an alphabetical list of members, with residence, date of joining and number of member's group; (c) a record of each group for a year, including the names of visitor and members, and columns for each member's quarterly record; (d) a set of summing-up pages, on which the quarterly totals of the several groups may be brought together and footed; (e) blanks for the quarterly and annual reports; (f) the cash account. The superintendent, or some friend who is a bookkeeper, can with a little ingenuity and some patience rule such a book for himself; or he can buy one, of a size adapted to his field, from the publishers of this manual.

Progress by Decrease.—While laboring for the retention and increase of the Home Department members, the superintendent and visitors will, of course, never forget that the mission of the Home Department is like that of John the Baptist. It must ever be ready to decrease that the Sunday school proper may increase. Nothing should so delight a visitor as to be able to report that every member originally assigned to her care has left the department by joining a class or becoming a teacher in the Sunday school. The superintendent should look for the transfer of one or more of these graduates to the roll of the main school every quarter.

It is important, for statistical reasons and also to locate responsibility, that this transfer should be made promptly and according to some regular system. No person should be permitted to retain membership in the department and at the same time be carried on the roll of a class.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The Home Department superintendent should appeal to the school superintendent to see that such a system is instituted and placed in the hands of the school secretary to be carried out. Visitors who are not at the same time members, teachers or officers of the main school should be urged to enroll themselves as Home Department members in their own groups, studying the lessons regularly and reporting to themselves. They need regular Bible study as much as do those they visit. The number of visitors not thus enrolled somewhere should be added to the number of studying members to make up the total of Home Department members reported.

The Income.—If the income of the department is to be kept up, the members must be kept informed of the amounts contributed and the use that is made of the money. It is just as bad policy in the Home Department as in the main school to use the pupils' gifts for the purchase of lesson helps and other supplies. No church need plead poverty as an excuse for not changing this; for the plan that is better educationally is also better financially. Let the church agree to provide all the needed supplies for the Home Department, if the Home Department will take care of some specific burden that has been laid upon the church—some *pro rata* assessment for a benevolent or ecclesiastical cause, the interest or principal of some special debt, or, if it must be, some one item of church expense. Then, at the next Home Department social, after consultation with the visitors, let these financial plans be explained to the members and approved by them. If this is followed up by a printed or duplicated annual report, giving the details of receipts and expenditures,

THE HOME DEPARTMENT

the revenue of that department, without any special efforts by the visitors, will steadily grow.

Growing.—A department that thus persistently refuses to consider itself complete, or its work perfect, will not only grow, but in its growing will be a continual blessing to the Sunday school and the church on the one hand, and to the homes on the other. And if its superintendent and visitors have the spirit of Christ, and are ready to “speak a word in season to him that is weary,” new openings for spiritual effort will continually present themselves, and the kingdom of heaven in that place will be built up.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

IX

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

BY

REV. JAY S. STOWELL

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

I

THE UNCULTIVATED FIELD

THE vast extent of the field undeveloped by the Sunday school reminds one of the great stretch of desert a few years ago in our western states which to-day is producing wheat, alfalfa, apples, plums and peaches. All that was lacking was some one to believe in the uncultivated field and to give it a chance.

Out of a population of over ninety million people the International Sunday School Association reports as the total Sunday-school enrollment in the United States approximately fifteen and one-half million persons. This includes officers, teachers, Cradle Roll members and Home Department members, as well as active pupils.

In some states less than one person in ten is in direct touch with the Sunday school, while in other states the proportion is one in four or five. Recent surveys of a more intensive character have given us information which is equally interesting. In some of our eastern states, where the Sunday school has its best hold, the survey of typical counties has shown in some cases as high as sixty per cent of the boys and girls of school age who are not in touch with any Sunday school. In one Protestant county with a school age population of 8545, the survey showed

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

that 5195 were not even enrolled in Sunday school. In our sparsely settled western states it is estimated that a million and a half boys and girls of school age are not reached by the Sunday school. We have improved our Sunday schools, but the enrollment has not kept pace with the improvement. This is doubly significant when we realize that family prayers, grace at meals and the Bible bedtime stories are often unknown to-day. More and more parents are depending on the Sunday school and the Sunday school is not rising to its opportunity.

When we consider the matter of Sunday-school attendance as compared with enrollment, we find that our information is entirely inadequate. It is impossible to say how many adults or how many children attend Sunday school on any given Sunday. The carelessness with which Sunday-school records have been kept and the lack of differentiation between adult pupils and pupils of school age leaves us very uncertain as to what proportion of the boys and girls are really being reached by Sunday schools. Enough data are at hand, however, to make certain these facts:

(a) Millions of boys and girls in our country are not reached by the Sunday school, by the parochial school or by the synagogue school.

(b) Tens of millions of adults are entirely out of direct touch with these institutions.

A new meaning is added to these statistics when we remember that we are taking into our country each year large numbers of individuals of foreign parentage, birth and ideals, and that these individuals are not being reached by the Sunday schools already in existence, nor are new Sunday schools provided in sufficient numbers

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

or with sufficient conveniences to accommodate these newcomers.

The question of whether or not Protestant, Christian ideals are really to dominate our society in another generation lies very largely with the Sunday school to-day. The home and the public school are not solving the problem.

Undoubtedly, we need more Sunday schools in our rural sections and in our sparsely settled frontier districts. The attendance of pupils at Sunday school is practically prohibited in the country by a distance of three or four miles, and often a much shorter distance proves an insurmountable obstacle. In our cities a few blocks often prove to be as effective a barrier to Sunday-school attendance as the same number of miles in the country. In the congested districts of our great cities we have not the necessary number of Sunday schools, nor are they adequately equipped to care for the boys and girls of native and foreign parentage who live in these communities. However, despite the fact that many are out of reach of Sunday school, we find only a few schools which are definitely aiming to reach all the unreached in their own communities. Few are using their own equipment and resources to the limit.

II

THINGS FUNDAMENTAL

If the Sunday school is to exist it must secure new members, as the old members are continually leaving the school. It is estimated that in some sections Sunday schools change practically their entire personnel every four or five years.

The real problem of Sunday-school attendance, however, is not to maintain the Sunday school, but to find some way of reaching the unreached. As Marion Lawrance says: "Many are unreached. God wants them reached. They can be reached."

No One Method.—In the study of individual Sunday schools it becomes quite evident that there is no one method of securing Sunday-school attendance which is bound to succeed at all times and in all places. No one method will work equally well in the same school at different times, nor will it work equally well with pupils of different ages and from different environments.

Many of the plans which have been used most effectively seem so simple that they hardly appear to be worth trying. In most cases, however, the simple plans are the best plans.

The successful Sunday-school worker must be ready to get ideas from all sources and to adapt them to local conditions. He must be alert continually to watch details of development and to study local needs and conditions. There must be variety and movement, and the

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

ingenuity of the most active worker will be taxed to the limit.

In every case the spirit which dominates the workers will be more important than the particular methods which are used. If a pure and wholesome enthusiasm pervades the school the most ordinary methods for developing attendance will prove successful, while without this the best methods are doomed to failure.

In studying all the notably successful schools one comes back at last to a single individual, or a group of two or three individuals, to whom the real success of the work may be attributed. These individuals have made others enthusiastic, and have kept their guiding hands on the multitudinous details of an elaborate organization. Some of our most remarkable superintendents have been bankers and men of other large business affairs, who are accustomed to do their work systematically and to look after details with care.

Filling a Real Need.—The child as well as the adult is, in the long run, permanently attracted toward those things which satisfy a real need in his life. We cannot, therefore, expect to depend upon exhortation, appeal to duty, parental compulsion or artificial incentive to secure Sunday-school attendance. These are always second-rate and always temporary. This does not mean that none of these motives or methods should be used, but that ultimately the Sunday school must fill a real place in the pupil's life or he will discard it.

The marked tendency to-day to recognize the pupil's needs in all Sunday-school activity strikes at the very root of the problem, and this is already reacting favorably

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

upon the matter of attendance. We have discovered that the Sunday school exists for the sake of the pupil, and in this discovery we have found the key to Sunday-school attendance. When the Sunday school fills a felt need in the life of the pupil no methods can keep him away. Henry F. Cope says, "A great many schools are using up a lot of energy urging everyone to come to nothing." There is doubtless much truth in this. There is little value in getting more pupils into the Sunday school than can be handled satisfactorily, or in urging people to come to a school where there is nothing worth while when they arrive. This fact is not an excuse for inactivity, but a challenge to individual Christians to make their Sunday schools worth while, and then to see that the last person is brought in.

III

THE STORY OF ONE SCHOOL

(Attention is drawn to this school because it represents a type which abounds in our smaller towns and rural hamlets.)

IN a small town in the northern part of Illinois a man with some years' experience in the Christian ministry felt that he had never been able to make the progress in his work which he had desired. He had done conventional work with the adults, and he now resolved, as an experiment, to give his attention to the children and to center his interest in the Sunday school. He had a very ordinary Sunday school with an average attendance of thirty-five to forty.

Without attempting any spectacular methods he began to get acquainted with children on the street. He took pains to talk to them and to invite them to his Sunday school. He planned to walk down the street at the time when the children were returning from school, so that he might get a chance to meet them. Wherever children were likely to be, he arranged in an unobtrusive way to be present. Instead of an acquaintance he became their friend.

How the School Grew.—In a year his Sunday school developed to an average attendance of sixty to seventy-five. The second year the average attendance for the entire year was ninety-two, and the third year one hun-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

dred and thirty, with a definite aim at one hundred and fifty.

The pastor acted as his own superintendent. He had numerous assistants on whom he could call at any time, but he stayed in charge of the work.

He arranged to have something new and interesting in the service each Sunday. He had special features for the opening and for the closing. There was nothing spectacular, but always something to rouse interest, and the pupils never knew just what was coming.

He at once saw the value of the graded school, with lessons adapted to the pupils' needs and interests, and he proceeded to grade his school thoroughly. In the hands of good teachers these lessons became perhaps the greatest single drawing feature of the Sunday-school session.

Special Days.—He made a great deal of the special days. He always kept something ahead for the pupils to anticipate. Rally Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, New Year's, Washington's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, Easter and Children's Day were all appropriately observed. He did not have special exercises, but there was something a little unusual on all these occasions.

In addition to these days a May Party was held each spring in the church parlors, and for a month this was the talk of the school. Every pupil received a written invitation to this party. To the invitations for the younger pupils was added the phrase, "Bring Mamma and Papa."

In fact, all such special occasions were remembered by written invitations to the pupils. These were not mailed,

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

but were personally addressed and given to the individuals on Sunday.

The picnic during the summer was also a feature which added interest to the life of the school. This was planned and worked up with great care.

Teachers' conferences were held once or twice a month at which the department work was emphasized. This not only helped to improve the methods of the workers but also created an *esprit de corps* among them.

Pupils' Coöperation.—Particular care was taken not to invite pupils from other Sunday schools, but the pupils and teachers worked together to secure such persons as were not enrolled elsewhere. In some cases class members were known to call up other members of the class to make sure that they would all be present at the Sunday-school session in order that the high record for their classes might be kept up. This was done without any direct suggestion on the part of teachers or parents.

Caring for Supplies.—One unusual feature in connection with this Sunday school was the emphasis placed upon caring for the supplies. The introduction of graded lessons gave an opportunity for this. The superintendent believed that the pupils would not place a higher value upon the lesson helps, and consequently upon the Sunday school, than did he. Accordingly, he emphasized the importance of caring for the lesson helps; they were not to be rolled up, nor were they to be lost or disfigured in any way. They were to be kept so neatly that they could be used again by another class. This was not only a matter of economy, but it gave the pupils a real sense of respon-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

sibility. Occasionally a lesson help was rolled. In such a case there was no harsh criticism. It was kindly suggested, however, that the only possible way to remedy the injury was to dampen carefully the cover of the book and place it between two larger books over night or until dry. This proved effective and the pupils learned to care for their helps. The great gain, however, was that they began to consider them of real value and to see a reason for this unusual care.

Dignity in Sunday School.—Everything about the school was done with dignity and was considered important. For example, when the adult class did not come into the closing exercises of the school, a messenger was dispatched by the superintendent to carry the report of the day to this class. No matter was allowed to be regarded trivial.

There was no scolding or finding fault with the pupils, but special effort was made to show that the superintendent and the teachers trusted them. Again and again the superintendent said something like this: "This Sunday school will succeed because it has so many active boys and girls who are interested in its welfare."

Not a Miracle, but Hard Work.—No miracle accounts for this most remarkable development of a small school. This is simply the case of one individual in a small town believing in the possibilities of Sunday-school attendance, and going ahead without spectacular methods to reach individual boys and girls, and then to make the Sunday school so worth while that when they came once they wished to come again.

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

At a recent communion this pastor took into the church sixteen young people from his Sunday school, all of whom had had personal instruction from him as to the meaning of this step. They knew him as a friend and gladly opened their hearts to him on these personal matters.

One remarkable result in this case was that parents who had not been reached by any other method became church attendants without urging, because the Sunday school had reached the children.

IV

SOME SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

Brazil, Indiana.—Within the last few years the First Methodist Episcopal Sunday School of Brazil, Indiana, has attracted widespread attention. On Easter Sunday, April 26, 1911, by what seemed to many a most spectacular and phenomenal record, this school became the largest Sunday school in the world.

The growth within a period of one year had been most wonderful, and yet, as one reads the story of the school, there is the feeling that it was not the campaign of a year which accounted for the remarkable results, but rather the many years of work of a superintendent with a long experience. He had laid the foundations, and had gotten together a corps of workers who were filled with his spirit and with the Spirit of the Master, and who were willing to sacrifice and to labor both for the school and for the development of the kingdom.

This remarkable Sunday school of nearly five thousand enrollment in a town of only a little over nine thousand inhabitants shows the possibilities of Sunday-school development when the workers are really enthusiastic. It was the spirit which dominated this school rather than any method which accounted for this growth.

The value of a slogan both for the school and for the individual classes was well demonstrated in the campaign for increase which this school waged. The motto of the entire school was this, "This School Seeks the Last One." The men's Bible class took for its motto, "The Largest

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

Men's Bible Class in the Largest Sunday School in the World." As the pastor says, "This was a big cry, but the men flung it far." Their slogan was "Every man get a man," and the slogan itself added spirit to their work. Other classes adopted similar mottoes with equal success. "Every member of the church in the Sunday school, and every member of the Sunday school in the Church" was heard far and wide.

The attempt to double the enrollment of the school within the space of one year was successful. When the Cradle Roll forged ahead and became the largest Cradle Roll in the world, with 818 babies enrolled, the whole school caught the spirit.

Much might be written about the success of this great Sunday school, but it would be hard to put one's finger on the one thing which accounted for the remarkable development. There was a spirit of deep consecration and a willingness to sacrifice for the work. There was no hanging back, but everyone was willing to fall in and adopt plans suggested by the leaders. It was this willingness to coöperate which made possible achievements greater than any individuals working independently could have accomplished.

As the result of the experience of this school the pastor summarizes the three great external elements as follows:

1. Organization—thorough, compact and complete.
2. Publicity—sane, sound, attractive and original.
3. Solicitation—carrying your goods to the market as the business man solicits the retailer.

In Brazil organization was back of publicity. The newspapers were used and were filled with items in regard

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

to the school. Printer's ink was found most effective. Nothing, however, succeeded like the personal solicitation by the superintendent, teachers and the class members.

Brooklyn, New York.—The Bushwick Avenue Methodist Episcopal Sunday School of Brooklyn has had an equal success by similar methods, although under other circumstances. Here we have a little mission Sunday school which developed until it in its turn became the largest Sunday school. There has not been the rapid growth which characterized the Brazil school, but the spirit and the methods have not been very different.

In one respect, however, the Bushwick Avenue school differs from the Brazil school. One of the important features of the school at Brazil is the adult development, but as one visits the Bushwick Avenue Sunday school the absence of a regular Adult Department is quite marked. The workers in the Bushwick school are glad to have adults in the Sunday school, but they expect them to go to work. They therefore utilize the adults as teachers, librarians, secretaries, ushers and in various other positions. There are large numbers of adults in the school, but most of them have regular tasks. A few are taught in classes, but there is no such remarkable adult class as the one in Brazil.

The evangelistic spirit is kept to the front, and it is impossible for a visitor to go into this school without feeling the throb of a real religious life.

The school tries to show its interest in the pupils by helping them in every possible way. An employment bureau is a part of the work, and from Sunday to Sunday, as opportunities for employment come, these are an-

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

nounced before the school. Many of the pupils who are in need of work are in this way placed in satisfactory positions.

The social side of the class and department groups is also a feature, although the school is much too large to make social gatherings of the entire group possible.

In this case, however, as in the case of the Brazil school, we come back to one man. Without him and his long years of patient labor as a background the Bushwick Avenue school would not be possible.

Holding Its Pupils.—A short time ago, when the Child Welfare Exhibit was held in one of our great cities, an attempt was made to find which Sunday school held its pupils best during the critical years of adolescence. The school which apparently did this task best was characterized by the following:

- (a) The school was entirely graded.
- (b) Much was made of the home work.
- (c) The classes were organized by years, as in high school.
- (d) There was a definite time for graduation (20 years of age).
- (e) Each teacher acted as a sub-pastor, feeling a sense of responsibility for the pupils in his care.
- (f) Pupils graduated from the Sunday school into the Graduate or Adult Department.

It was found that this Sunday school held its pupils not only during the years of adolescence, but that they returned and kept up their connection with the school after their graduation.

The organization into classes known by the year in

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

which they were to graduate was found to be most satisfactory. This was not carried below the four high-school years. For example, those to graduate in 1916 were known as the 1916 class; those to graduate in 1915, the 1915 class, and so on. This gave an opportunity for a real class spirit, class songs, mottoes, class socials and a genuine class life. Of course, this did not interfere with the teaching of class groups, which were small, as in other schools, but there was this larger loyalty among those who were to graduate during a given year. For holding adolescents the value of a definite time for graduation after completing a graded course of study can hardly be overemphasized.

V

GENERAL METHODS WHICH HAVE BEEN USED

The Survey Method.—One of the methods which has been tried recently in a number of schools is the survey method. This is in line with the spirit of the times. It gives the workers definite information in regard to the conditions in their own field, and this alone is usually enough to inspire them to activity. The survey may be made by a special committee, an adult class or any other authorized group. The work must be done wisely and tactfully and all the information carefully tabulated, if the best results are to be secured. A distinct effort should be made to secure accurate information.

Curious things have been revealed by the surveys. In a few cases schools have discovered they did not have so large a field, especially among the children, as they had supposed, but in most cases the opposite was true, and it has been found that there were far more individuals unreached than anyone had imagined. In any case, however, the setting of definite limits to the field, and the making of a survey to discover the number of individuals living within them, the number attending Sunday school or connected with other religious schools, the number of children of school age and the number unreached by any Sunday school, place the task of the school so clearly before it that nothing but good can result. The survey itself will, of course, accomplish little. It must be followed by personal work.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Promotion and Publicity Department.—One Sunday school in Chicago organized a Promotion and Publicity Department, with the most satisfactory results. A very marked increase in membership and attendance followed the work of this department. The plan was to keep in touch with the entire district and to know what was happening. Vacant houses and moving vans were watched, and as soon as a new family came into the community, it was visited by some member of the school. Children were at once invited to attend the Sunday school, if they were not already members of some other school.

Card Files.—Card files were kept, so that the information obtained by the volunteer visitors could be on file for future use. One or two persons in the block were held particularly responsible for the territory near their homes. They either reported newcomers to the head of the Publicity Department or visited them and then reported the results of their visit. Other schools have tried a similar method with success.

Following Up Absentees.—A good many schools have tried this method, and its advantages are very evident. There are many systems of attending to this matter. In some places it is attended to by a regular visitor, who calls upon pupils if they are absent even one Sunday. In other cases a reminder is sent by mail. This is of various types. In some cases it contains a suggestion that the pupil may be sick or in trouble; while in other cases it is simply a reminder of absence with an invitation to return. Some schools have a different reminder which is sent out after two absences.

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

The Progressive Follow-Up System.—A school in Englewood, Illinois, has a progressive follow-up system by which each successive absence brings a personal call, a 'phone message or a notice from another official one step higher up. The first week the teacher looks after the matter; the second week, the general secretary of the school; the third week, the department superintendent, and the fourth week, without excuse, the general superintendent. Other schools have similar plans.

Following Up Lost Pupils.—Most Sunday-school workers have not felt any particular responsibility for informing other Sunday schools of pupils moving into their locality. More and more this is being done, but a more elaborate system of coöperation should be developed. Sunday-school superintendents ought to feel responsible for every person who moves from a community and thereby gives up Sunday-school membership, until that person is satisfactorily located in another school.

"Round-Up" Sunday.—In some schools in New York City "Round-up Sunday" has been used with great effect. This is similar in its idea to Rally Day, except that it comes at a different time of the year, and the idea is to "round up" everyone who can be reached. This method has been used by individual schools and by large groups of schools to good advantage. The feeling that other schools in the local community are coöperating in a general movement helps to add enthusiasm to the work.

Attention to the Opening Devotional Service.—One school in New York aims particularly to emphasize the opening devotional period, and to make this so interesting

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

that the pupils do not care to miss it. They are careful also to prevent any disturbance during this period, and late comers are sometimes asked to remain outside if their entrance would interfere with the service. It was found that the pupils really enjoyed this service, every portion of which was arranged with them in mind, and that it proved a real incentive to Sunday-school attendance and to early attendance. A Sunday-school orchestra is a real help in this connection.

Early and Late Signs.—Some schools lay a good deal of stress on prompt attendance, making use of the signs "I am late" and "I am early." Some of the most successful Sunday schools, however, have paid very little attention to this matter, but have depended upon the general interest to keep up a prompt attendance.

The Bushwick Avenue school in Brooklyn works on the theory that it is better for a pupil to be in the Sunday school for a portion of the hour than not to be there at all, and so they do not emphasize early and late aspects of attendance, lest some should be discouraged from coming.

Secretary's Report.—In many schools this is made prominent, and it is a factor in keeping up the interest in attendance. Comparative reports showing relative attendance of one Sunday with the attendance one year previous never lose their interest, and are undoubtedly an incentive. A homemade board or chart may be used for this purpose.

In some cases a thermometer, showing the temperature of the school as tested by its attendance, has been used satisfactorily.

In other cases comparative curves made on easily pre-

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

pared coördinate paper were of interest; these may be made to cover a period of three months, an entire year or even five years. These are readily understood, and always remind pupils and teachers of the general trend of the school, whether it be up or down.

A school in Topeka, Kansas, has a system of comparative charts which are prepared annually, showing the relative growth of the various departments. A circle is divided into segments, one being allowed to the Beginners, another each to the Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior and Adult departments. Officers and teachers also have a segment. These comparative charts show the relative growth of the departments from year to year and also the addition of new departments. This school lays a great deal of emphasis upon the Sunday-school records. The aim is to have as little of this work done by the teacher as possible and as much by the regular secretaries. The reason for this is twofold: First, many teachers do not take an interest in the secretarial side of the work; and, second, the teacher's time is thus left free for other work.

A Well-Equipped Building.—Many superintendents feel that a large element in their success is the well-equipped building at their disposal. The separate classrooms and department rooms, with their roller partitions and other features, tend to make the workers and the pupils comfortable and to make the Sunday-school session a pleasure. Many schools are now working toward permanent classrooms which can be closed up or opened at the disposal of the class during the week. Such a room gives the pupil a sense of proprietorship which does not come with a room inclosed only by roller doors.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The Home Department.—The organization of a Home Department makes the work of the Sunday-school visitor easy. There is always a proper channel for the enrollment of all the members in the family. Many who become interested in the Home Department later find it possible to attend the regular sessions of the school.

Withdrawal Cards.—Some schools insist upon a withdrawal request on the part of the pupils before they are released from membership. They have thus found it possible to keep track of all those who have dropped from the rolls and to know the reason for their dismissal. The value of this is not likely to be overemphasized, as it enables superintendents to place pupils in case of removal in touch with other schools.

Standard of Membership.—Some schools have a definite though simple standard of membership and a formal reception of new members. Without doubt, this gives a feeling of responsibility to the newcomer, and is a real asset in securing regular attendance. In some cases consecutive attendance for a period of three weeks is required for membership. In other cases it is simply the declaration of intention to become a member of the Sunday school and to work for its welfare.

Printed Announcements.—Many schools print leaflets describing their organization, their curriculum, the dates of the school year, special occasions, plans for the school worship and other items of interest. These give dignity to all the Sunday-school functions and call attention to unrecognized values in the Sunday school. Church

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

bulletins may also be used for a similar purpose. A Sunday-school bulletin, containing notes from the librarian, from the secretary and other officers of the school, together with items of interest about the school in general and individual pupils, may be used to good advantage. In some cases the pupils themselves could prepare and print this bulletin.

A Combination Service.—A church and Sunday school in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, has tried with marked success a combination morning service. This accomplished two things: It got the children into the preaching service and it got the adults into the Sunday school. The enrollment of the Sunday school has grown considerably and the average attendance has been larger than for five years previous. A few other schools are trying a similar arrangement. It emphasizes the teaching function of the Church and also partially solves the problem of the multiplicity of services on Sunday.

Extension Work.—This is, according to Dr. Cope, a broadening out of the Home Department idea. Men in the shops and factories might be reached by such a method. Then there are hospitals, prisons and other institutions for which some Sunday school should become responsible. Summer camps and resorts and boarding houses also furnish groups often entirely unreached. The possibility of this extension work is almost unlimited, and schools might well be proud to have numerous branches extending out to these needy fields. Correspondence classes might even be developed.

VI

REACHING THE CHILD

FUNDAMENTALLY, the problem of Sunday-school attendance is the problem of getting hold of the child. We are proud of our adult classes and of all that the Bible class has accomplished. We are always glad to have the adults in our Sunday schools, but the children we must have or fail. The value of the Sunday school, as of all schools, is, and always must be, greatest for the individual in the process of development.

Ministry to Young Parents.—One school in the Middle West made a good deal of its ministry to the young parents, feeling that if the school was to have a healthy development it must get hold of children at an early age. This service for the parents consisted in providing appropriate literature dealing with the care and nurture of infants and with problems of parenthood. Storybooks appropriate for parents' use were also provided. Once a year a special party was given for all the young married people. This was usually given on Washington's Birthday, and was made a prominent feature of the year's work. Having thus secured the interest of the parents, it was not difficult to secure the child for Sunday school when the proper age was reached.

Cradle Roll.—In connection with the method just described, the importance of the Cradle Roll should be sug-

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

gested. Much has been written upon Cradle-Roll methods, and it is unnecessary to go into detail in regard to these. The value of this can hardly be overestimated. It secures the coöperation of the parent, and the value to the child as he comes to the years of understanding in realizing that he has for a long time been connected with the Sunday school is of considerable importance. The annual reception for Cradle-Roll members is a most effective way of keeping hold of the parents and thus enlisting the pupils at an early age in the school.

Children's Sermons.—Many schools are now merging the closing exercises of the Sunday school with the opening exercises of the church service, a children's sermon being a feature of this, the children then passing out at the proper time. Without doubt, this helps to bind the pupil to the church, and also to make Sunday-school attendance worth while.

The Value of the Kindergarten.—The kindergarten is of great value as a feeder of the Sunday school. If this is made interesting and helpful, the child forms the habit of Sunday-school attendance so young that he feels a real disappointment if he is obliged to be absent. The kindergarten operated in close coöperation with the Cradle Roll is a most effective method of building up the Sunday-school enrollment from the most promising material.

Coöperation with Parents.—One school which kept a careful record of the causes of absence of its pupils found that in fifty per cent of the cases it was due to lack of coöperation on the part of the parents. This coöperation

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

can be secured by giving the parents the idea that the Sunday-school worker is really interested in the welfare of the pupil, and expects the parents to do their share in the development of the child.

Reaching Children Through Parents.—After careful study of the situation, Rev. William Walter Smith feels sure that the solution of the attendance problem lies in an approach to the parents. This is effected through a series of small penny pamphlets, specially prepared and worked over by a number of recognized experts. These cover plain truths directed to parents, couched in simple and unmistakable language. One school, by the use of these pamphlets, increased its attendance in two weeks from seventy-four to one hundred and ninety-two, and in two weeks more to two hundred and twenty-five. Nothing else was done by this school during this period to secure an increase of membership. As Dr. Smith says: "This was evidently an unworked field, and this result could not be possible in a locality where there was no great number of unreached children."

Parents' meetings and other similar methods will also reach the child through the home. Giving the parent to understand that the Sunday school is simply working with him and that he is responsible for a good portion of the result is always beneficial. Parents' Days in the Sunday school, mothers' meetings and other like plans will contribute to this end. One remarkable Sunday school in Chicago has an attendance of over six hundred, and they are not conscious of using any methods to secure this attendance. They attribute it entirely to the European Protestant traditions in the home.

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

Rewards.—In mission Sunday schools particularly, rewards have been used to good advantage. One Sunday-school missionary always gave a Testament to children who came to Sunday school every Sunday for three months and learned the title of the lesson and the golden text each Sunday. For pupils over thirteen who did these things, and learned in addition the Twenty-third Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, a Bible was the reward. This was very wholesome and gave an opportunity to place Bibles in homes where no Bibles had hitherto been. Among a more favored class of pupils, however, this would not be so successful or desirable.

VII

THE "TEEN" AGE

NOWHERE has Sunday-school leakage been greater than during the adolescent period. Experience has shown, however, that losses here can be eliminated by careful and earnest work.

Organized Classes.—At no time is it more essential that classes be organized than during the "teen" age, when the natural grouping instinct is strongest. The successful organized classes, however, are those which have a definite purpose and genuine activity. Organization for the sake of organization is not of great value.

Athletics.—There is no doubt that well-organized athletics, either in the gymnasium or on the ball ground, will do much to keep up the interest and enthusiasm of the boys. The opportunity here, however, is much more than that of keeping hold of the boys. There are few places where moral and religious ideas can be more efficiently taught and put into practice than in sport. Club-rooms for boys under proper supervision are equally valuable. The supervision of a man is most desirable here.

A Baseball League.—The four Sunday schools of Columbus, Kansas, organized a Baseball League, with two games scheduled for each week. These were played on the village green at six o'clock in the evening. No person

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

was allowed to play who did not attend Sunday school at least fifty per cent of the time, and every player must have been a Sunday-school member for at least two weeks. A wholesome rivalry sprang up and the townspeople attended the games in large numbers. Not only were the Sunday schools permanently built up, but a number of young men were brought into the church as a result. Most of the players were from eighteen to twenty-three years of age. During the winter a Basket-ball League was organized.

Summer Camps.—Many schools are making use of the Summer Camp for boys with most satisfactory results.

Department Organization and Promotion Days.—A thorough department organization, with well-established promotion days, makes the pupil feel that he is progressing, and his interest is much more easily retained than in a group which goes round and round in a treadmill and never arrives anywhere.

Pastor's Bodyguard.—Junior boys can be used as a pastor's bodyguard to assist him in various ways. The feeling of responsibility and importance which thus comes is another link to bind the young people to the school.

Reaching the Boys.—One Sunday-school worker who has been most successful in persuading boys to attend the Sunday school, and in interesting them when they are there, sums up his experience as follows:

(a) Show the boys they are wanted.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

can be secured by giving the parents the idea that the Sunday-school worker is really interested in the welfare of the pupil, and expects the parents to do their share in the development of the child.

Reaching Children Through Parents.—After careful study of the situation, Rev. William Walter Smith feels sure that the solution of the attendance problem lies in an approach to the parents. This is effected through a series of small penny pamphlets, specially prepared and worked over by a number of recognized experts. These cover plain truths directed to parents, couched in simple and unmistakable language. One school, by the use of these pamphlets, increased its attendance in two weeks from seventy-four to one hundred and ninety-two, and in two weeks more to two hundred and twenty-five. Nothing else was done by this school during this period to secure an increase of membership. As Dr. Smith says: "This was evidently an unworked field, and this result could not be possible in a locality where there was no great number of unreached children."

Parents' meetings and other similar methods will also reach the child through the home. Giving the parent to understand that the Sunday school is simply working with him and that he is responsible for a good portion of the result is always beneficial. Parents' Days in the Sunday school, mothers' meetings and other like plans will contribute to this end. One remarkable Sunday school in Chicago has an attendance of over six hundred, and they are not conscious of using any methods to secure this attendance. They attribute it entirely to the European Protestant traditions in the home.

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

Rewards.—In mission Sunday schools particularly, rewards have been used to good advantage. One Sunday-school missionary always gave a Testament to children who came to Sunday school every Sunday for three months and learned the title of the lesson and the golden text each Sunday. For pupils over thirteen who did these things, and learned in addition the Twenty-third Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, a Bible was the reward. This was very wholesome and gave an opportunity to place Bibles in homes where no Bibles had hitherto been. Among a more favored class of pupils, however, this would not be so successful or desirable.

VII

THE "TEEN" AGE

NOWHERE has Sunday-school leakage been greater than during the adolescent period. Experience has shown, however, that losses here can be eliminated by careful and earnest work.

Organized Classes.—At no time is it more essential that classes be organized than during the "teen" age, when the natural grouping instinct is strongest. The successful organized classes, however, are those which have a definite purpose and genuine activity. Organization for the sake of organization is not of great value.

Athletics.—There is no doubt that well-organized athletics, either in the gymnasium or on the ball ground, will do much to keep up the interest and enthusiasm of the boys. The opportunity here, however, is much more than that of keeping hold of the boys. There are few places where moral and religious ideas can be more efficiently taught and put into practice than in sport. Club-rooms for boys under proper supervision are equally valuable. The supervision of a man is most desirable here.

A Baseball League.—The four Sunday schools of Columbus, Kansas, organized a Baseball League, with two games scheduled for each week. These were played on the village green at six o'clock in the evening. No person

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

was allowed to play who did not attend Sunday school at least fifty per cent of the time, and every player must have been a Sunday-school member for at least two weeks. A wholesome rivalry sprang up and the townspeople attended the games in large numbers. Not only were the Sunday schools permanently built up, but a number of young men were brought into the church as a result. Most of the players were from eighteen to twenty-three years of age. During the winter a Basket-ball League was organized.

Summer Camps.—Many schools are making use of the Summer Camp for boys with most satisfactory results.

Department Organization and Promotion Days.—A thorough department organization, with well-established promotion days, makes the pupil feel that he is progressing, and his interest is much more easily retained than in a group which goes round and round in a treadmill and never arrives anywhere.

Pastor's Bodyguard.—Junior boys can be used as a pastor's bodyguard to assist him in various ways. The feeling of responsibility and importance which thus comes is another link to bind the young people to the school.

Reaching the Boys.—One Sunday-school worker who has been most successful in persuading boys to attend the Sunday school, and in interesting them when they are there, sums up his experience as follows:

(a) Show the boys they are wanted.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

- (b) Treat them as friends and not acquaintances.
- (c) Provide social functions.
- (d) Set them at work.

Class Loyalty.—This can be promoted through class exhibits, class pins, badges, membership certificates, class social functions, class banners and a class flower. A class name is also of the first importance.

“Messenger Cadets.”—The Moody Church Sunday school, Chicago, Illinois, has a system of Messenger Cadets to look after the first and second Sunday’s absentees. The Sunday-school visitor calls upon the absentees for the third Sunday, and the fourth Sunday, the superintendent takes up the matter by letter. After the fifth Sunday the name is dropped from the roll if there is no good reason for absence. In one week the Messenger Cadets made ninety-two calls and returned a total of twenty-five pupils. One school made use of these messenger boys to deliver telegrams to absent pupils.

Pupils as Promoters.—The value of the pupils as attendance promoters should never be forgotten. Pupils can reach other individuals of their own age more satisfactorily than can adults. They intuitively understand the feelings and motives of their companions and know how to get hold of them for the Sunday school.

Vacant House Brigade.—One school organized a Vacant House Brigade. “For Sale” and “For Rent” signs were watched, and as soon as such a sign disappeared a call was made by a member of the Brigade or this fact was reported

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

to the authorities of the school. In this way some people who moved into the community during the week were brought into the school the first Sunday.

Information Blank.—Some schools prepare information blanks, so that the pupils can provide information concerning brothers, sisters, acquaintances and neighbors. This always indicates whether or not these individuals belong to any other Sunday school. This saves the time of house-to-house canvassing, by which much time can be wasted. This, followed up by a personal letter or visit, will often bring new members into the school. If an invitation is sent by letter, a card of acceptance to be returned may be included.

Rewards for New Members.—These are of many kinds and sorts and they are advertised widely. There is a real danger, however, that individuals will be approached with wrong motives and also that the credit for securing pupils may go to the wrong person. All such plans should be adopted with great caution, although in many cases they have produced genuine results. Probably some simple recognition of such service would be better than a reward.

Reception of New Pupils.—Pupils should be made to feel that they really have become members of the school, and nothing will add more to this than a public reception of the new members each Sunday. Many schools make much of this, and there is no doubt that it is a real factor in keeping the new members faithful to their obligations.

In connection with this reception the secretary may well

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

get the previous Sunday-school record of the pupil on an enrollment blank or school album. This will impress the pupil with the importance of a good, clear Sunday-school record. It is suggested that a neat card of greeting, with a calendar of church services, also be given to the new pupil, together with a certificate of membership.

The Assigning Officer.—Another factor is that of getting the pupil located in the proper department and class. Many schools are now setting aside a separate officer whose one duty it is to see that new pupils are assigned to the proper classes.

Letter to Parents.—In some schools, as soon as a pupil applies for admission, a letter is sent to the parents, asking their coöperation, and a certificate of approval is inclosed for the parents to sign. The church missionary then visits the home before the child is fully admitted to the school. All this tends to make the parent as well as the pupil take the Sunday-school membership seriously and to make unusual efforts that the attendance shall be regular. A system of reports to the parents can also be used to advantage.

Birthday Letters.—A careful record of the birthdays of the pupils is kept and each one receives from teacher or superintendent a birthday letter. This not only serves as a bond between the pupil and the school, but it also affords opportunity to talk intimately about serious and vital problems.

The Union School.—Many of the smaller communities have solved their problems by establishing union schools.

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

In a little town in Montana the Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists—although they could not accept real Christian unity—decided upon a union Sunday school. They found that a Sunday school of one hundred and fifty members was a great deal more spirited and effective than three Sunday schools of fifty each. Other communities have tried the same plan with marked success. A large school grows more readily than a small school, and it is much easier to reach all the individuals in a community by one large school than by three or four weak and struggling schools. The great gain is with the young people, who are together in their public-school and social life and do not like to be separated on Sundays.

Contests.—Many kinds of contests have been used to increase attendance. In some cases the contests have been between classes, in other cases between equally divided groups, and in a few cases between schools in near-by communities. The testimony of many Sunday schools, however, is that the contest method has to be used with great caution. There is danger that credit may go to the wrong individuals, and the chance for misunderstandings and ill will is very large. Many schools, however, have used various types of contest with considerable success, at least so far as increasing attendance is concerned.

Recognition of Attendance.—This may take the form of a recognition of perfect attendance of class groups, or of individuals, or both. It is probably well, however, to emphasize group loyalties, although there is much to be said in favor of individual records. This recognition is quite general in the larger Sunday schools, and in many

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

cases in the smaller schools. Sometimes a banner is presented to the class on the day on which it has a perfect record in the matter of attendance. At the end of the month another banner or another recognition is planned if the class has been perfect in attendance during the month. At the end of the year a permanent trophy is appropriate. There are many button systems, such as the Cross and Crown system, with recognition for individuals who have a perfect attendance record for periods of from one month to five or six or even ten years. No one of these methods will hold the interest of the entire school continuously, but they may be used for considerable periods with success.

The Honor Roll.—This is one of the very best ways of recognizing regular attendance on the part of the pupils, and many Sunday-school members point with pride to their names on the permanent Honor Roll of the school. These are of many kinds. They may be secured from various publishing houses or prepared locally.

Making Use of Church Officials and Business Men.—Nothing will add more dignity to the school than to have the church officials take an active interest in its conduct. Strong business men utilized as teachers are always a drawing card for the young men, and capable women are equally effective for the girls. H. H. Pike, superintendent of St. George's Sunday school, New York, says: "Hold strong men and women as teachers and you will hold the young men."

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

X

MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

BY

RALPH E. DIFFENDORFER

MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

I

THE POINT OF VIEW

THESE chapters are written from the point of view that the missionary life and spirit are natural and essential characteristics of all Christian living. Loving God and our fellow men is the sum of the commandments. This point of view rejects the possibility of a man's being a real Christian at all unless he is vitally missionary—yes, unless he is vitally a missionary—that is, unless he has a genuine regard for the needs of all God's children and a passion for the spread of the gospel of "good news," and gives himself in some way to the task, even unto sacrifice. The ultimate missionary motive is a complete and satisfying religious experience—one that fills the believer's life so full of Christian joy and happiness that he craves for the whole world the same blessing. No person can be a missionary until he himself has taken voluntarily the high purposes of God for his own personal life.

If we all agree that the missionary spirit is the very essence and core of Christian living, as most of us do, then we must be prepared to give it the central place in the educational process. When parents, teachers, ministers and other Christian leaders desire to educate a generation of children and youth in the ideals and practice of Chris-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

tian living, the first question regarding training in the true missionary spirit and work which they must face is: Will you accept the above point of view and be willing to follow its implications?

Those of the present generation of Christians who regard the missionary work of the Church as something "special," "optional," "irregular" or "over and above" the "regular" were never taught to regard it in any other terms.

This point of view, then, means two things:

(1) Those who teach and lead children and youth must give missions the central place in their own thinking and living.

(2) The educational methods and material used must bear this same essential relation to all of those processes whereby children and youth are guided into complete Christian living.

II

THE MISSIONARY COMMITTEE IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

IDEALLY there would be no place for a Missionary Committee in the Sunday school. If all of the officers and teachers themselves had been trained in accordance with the principles just mentioned there would be no need for a "special" machinery to educate the Church in its main business. Unfortunately, however, this is not the case. Until some generation produces a real missionary church it will be necessary for those who are interested and trained to take charge of the educational work which will help to produce such a missionary church.

Let all Sunday schools whose leaders feel they have not attained the ideal, organize strong missionary committees. Let them be regularly appointed or elected, and let them be strong and capable in educational matters and sanely missionary.

The Make-Up of the Committee.—The committee may consist of five or more members, as the size of the school demands. These members may represent the different departments of the school. The chairman should be a member of the Church Missionary Committee, a body now recommended as the unifying and clearing force for all the missionary organizations of the local church.¹

¹ See pamphlet, "The Church Missionary Committee," price 5 cents.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

General Suggestions.—Even though this committee may be considered a special agency, there are a few general suggestions, implications of the above point of view, which will help us to regard its work and the results as essential and not optional:

1. The appointment of the committee and the plans of work should not be heralded throughout the school as a provision of the authorities for making the school more missionary. There is some doubt as to whether or not the boys and girls need to know anything about the committee at all.

2. On the other hand, the school officers and teachers should plan that the work of the committee may find expression in the regular and normal life of the school.

3. Thus the committee itself will not attempt to do the work of missionary education in the school, but will endeavor to interest, arouse and help each officer and teacher to incorporate missionary teaching and activity into his own endeavor. The committee, once appointed, should stand off, as it were, and take stock of the regular machinery of the school through which it may seek to accomplish its ends. Rather than add a new department to the organization of the school, it should seek to "missionarize" the teachers and officers. The committee's relationship will be suggested in the diagram on page 307.

Thus the Missionary Committee will be back of the regular organization of the school; and all of its methods, material, activities and service will come before the pupils as regular and necessary parts of their religious training.

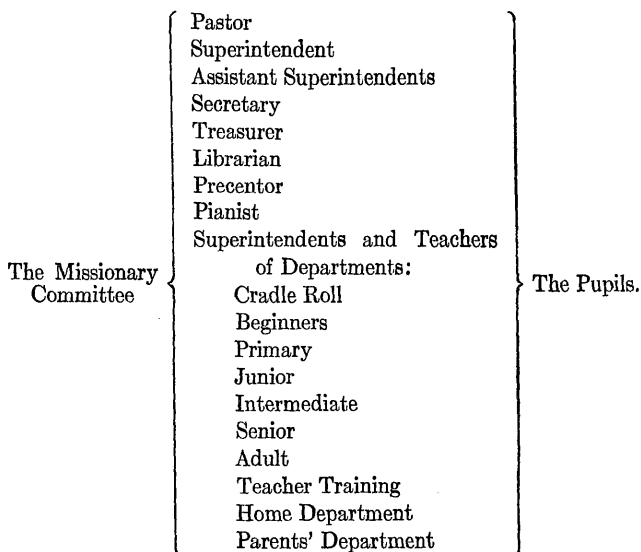
4. Not all the officers and teachers will respond with offers of coöperation. Whenever any of these fail the

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

committee should seek to arouse their interest and win their support.

Summing up these paragraphs, it may be said that the purpose of the Missionary Committee in a Sunday school is to seek to naturalize the missionary spirit and the work of missions in the lives of the members of the Sunday school.

The Sunday-school Organization:



III

GENERAL METHODS

By taking a broad view of the educational possibilities in a Sunday school, the Missionary Committee will find that it can attain its aims through the following general methods:

The Exercise of Worship.—Training in worship is one of the distinguishing features of the Sunday school. By organ, piano or other instrumental music, the singing of hymns, silent and spoken prayer, the reading of Scripture and quiet meditation the pupils may learn how to come into the presence of God through Jesus Christ and to realize his attitude to the human race.

The Development of a Missionary Atmosphere Through Environment and Special Occasions.—Missionary atmosphere is a silent educational force. Its presence or absence may be easily felt in homes, schools and churches. The appearance of the rooms, the decorations, the attitude of the leaders and teachers of pupils and the enthusiasm in any undertaking create its atmosphere.

Class Instruction.—Knowledge gives right direction to activities born of good impulses. The highest missionary endeavor demands knowledge of the needs of God's people everywhere, and especially of those who

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

pass within our daily experience. It demands a knowledge of the history, manners, customs and the religious aspirations of non-Christian peoples, of the motives, methods of work, successes and failures of missionaries, and of the transformations of those who have decided to take the will of God for their guidance in life.

This knowledge, made possible by a wide range of literature, may be gained best by class instruction and home reading. This teaching will, of course, be graded. Missionary instruction needs no special pedagogy; in fact, the teaching of it is quite similar to that of secular history. Missions is but another word, from a different point of view, for church history.

Home Reading with Class Reports.—Until there is more adequate provision for all branches of religious education, class instruction must be supplemented by home reading. Even with a good curriculum the vast outreaches of missionary life and endeavor will demand additional reading outside the classroom. Fortunately, the list of good missionary reading books for all ages is increasing.

An Adequate System of Giving.—The giving of money to further God's work is made necessary by the need of specialized missionary endeavor and the impossibility of extending the personal service of Christians to all parts of the world. Boys and girls should early be taught the principles of stewardship. This will give them the right attitude toward all their talents and goods; it will show them what money is for, and that it is a means to an end in all real living; and it will lead to the forma-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

tion of some system or regular method of giving which, with continued practice, may become habitual.

The Doing of Personal Service.—Boys and girls must be taught that stewardship is applied to more than money and goods. Some needs of the world can be met by the giving of thought, word and kindly deed, in acts of personal service. It is difficult to train generous givers of money, but it is also possible for men and women to feel that the use of money satisfies the requirements of personal service.

On account of the very close connection between activity, conduct and character the careful planning of kindly deeds to those who are in need is one of the Sunday school's greatest educational opportunities. In fact, if a Missionary Committee were compelled to choose for a beginning from the above general methods, the emphasis should be given to personal service.

In the succeeding pages these general methods will be further discussed, and the order suggested above will partially give way to treatment by departments or grades.

IV

THE EXERCISE OF WORSHIP

WORSHIP in a Sunday school usually consists of quiet music, the singing of hymns, prayer, reading of Scripture and meditation. These exercises are in charge of the general superintendent and the departmental assistants. How, then, can the Missionary Committee realize its aims through the order of worship?

Instrumental Music.—A loud, boistrous, highly strung orchestra with dance-a-jig music is not conducive either to reverential awe in the presence of God or to appreciation by the souls of men. Then why not aim to make use of the best music? The playing of a tribal melody of the American Indians or the native air of a foreign people or a representative selection from a great author who is Magyar, Italian, French, or of some other foreign nationality, with proper introductory and explanatory sentences by the superintendent may break down prejudice and open the way to genuine sympathy.

The Singing of Hymns.—Not all of the best missionary hymns are found in that division of the hymnal labeled "Missions." An examination of a number of popular Sunday-school songbooks showed that not only were the titles of most of the songs decidedly individualistic, with the pronouns "I," "me," "my," "mine," etc., predominant, but also the sentiment was selfish. The

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

Missionary Committee can help the superintendent and the precentor to discover the best hymns, those conveying the meanings of the majesty of the universal power and love of God, the breadth of his mercy, the racial aspects of the death of Christ, the world-wide extension of the kingdom of Christ, the strength of the Church universal and the joy and blessedness of the life of Christian service. Such hymns may be found, and already the newer emphasis on the altruistic and social messages of the gospel are finding expression in hymnology.

Whether or not these hymns convey their missionary meanings will depend on the way in which they are introduced. For instance, "The Church's One Foundation" is full of missionary content. Here is the Church erected on one foundation, "Jesus Christ her Lord," and built like any building of various and sundry materials, "Elect from every nation," and yet the whole, like a complete house, "One o'er all the earth."

A hymn does not carry its message merely because the words are missionary, but because, having understood its meaning, it is then sung well.

Silent and Spoken Prayer.—No prayer should ever be uttered before the young that does not contain some reference to missionary enterprise and to the life for others. In expressions of adoration, thanksgiving and petition public prayer may reiterate and reënforce the lessons of activity and study.

There are times,—as after an effective story or some other public exercise,—when, if the lesson is missionary, only silent prayer, guided by an occasional sentence from the leader, will bring each soul into the presence of God.

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

To be effective, missionary prayer needs to be definite. Generalities in prayer dull the spiritual senses. Personal references add to definiteness and do not destroy the dignity and power of spontaneous prayer.

A school prayer calendar will help. Take a sheet of white art board or Bristol board and print across the top some Scriptural reference to prayer and then add columns as follows:

Name	Station	Work	Occasion
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----

Then let the pupils, of their own initiative, write in the names of missionaries for the school's calendar for whom public prayer may be offered. Under the caption "Occasion" the pupils may add the time and manner of their point of contact with the missionaries. This prayer bulletin may be hung on the wall low enough for all to reach and should have a pencil attached.

Pupils should also be encouraged, through the teachers in the classes, to use private prayer calendars. Those made by the pupils themselves, in which they can enter their own objects for intercession, are preferable.

Scripture Reading.—The missionary value of Scripture reading, alternately or collectively, lies in the selection of the passage and the appropriate comments by the leader. With the coming of the Graded Lessons the opportunity for topical reading in the opening exercises has been greatly increased. The use of a passage of Scrip-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

ture on some missionary occasion or its influence in the life of a new convert often affords a point of contact for effective comments.

It will be noted from the above suggestions that each one of these items in the order of worship needs careful preparation. This is the secret, for unless they are well done it would be better not to attempt them.

V

A MISSIONARY ATMOSPHERE

By using a few minutes now and then during the opening or closing exercises, before the main school, in the departments or individual classes, or by recognizing special occasions, the Missionary Committee may produce an enthusiasm about the missionary enterprise which will prove contagious. Creating such an enthusiasm is a study in missionary idealism.

Teaching Loyalty to the Kingdom.—Loyalty to the kingdom of God on earth is like the newer patriotism demanding service to one's country. The missionary spirit is not dying for the kingdom, but living for it, day by day. Patriotism, in so far as it is loyalty to national ideals, is imbibed by the young in more striking ways than through the study of books. How can we produce loyalty to the ideals of the world-wide kingdom of Christ? The question may be best answered by drawing an analogy from the efforts, common to most nations, to surround growing youth with an atmosphere of patriotism and loyalty. In addition to the study of the history, geography and government of a country and of the biographies of its great men there may be found the following methods:

1. The presence of the flag and a regular salute to it.
2. The erection of commemorative monuments, tablets and statues, and the dedication of historical places with appropriate exercises.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

3. The observance of national festivals, public days, etc. which are historical, epoch-making days, birthdays, memorial days, etc.

4. The hanging of pictures representing national events and the portraits of great heroes and copies of public documents on the walls of public buildings, schoolrooms and homes.

5. The organization of patriotic societies and clubs among the boys and girls.

6. The direction of parades, demonstrations, drills, exhibits and other forms of arousing popular enthusiasm.

7. The visits of government officials, army and navy veterans, etc., to cities, towns, day schools and homes.

8. The provision of good storybooks and papers for homes and libraries, containing accounts of national heroes and events.

9. Story-telling, especially in the homes, in which the glories of the country and the classic tales of its founders and supporters are recounted.

10. The coöperation of the government, the Church, the home and the school in all of these matters.

The application of the above points to the kingdom of God on earth, its beginnings, its long and marvelous history, its significant epochs and its triumphant martyrs and heroes, ought to produce an atmosphere conducive to the highest missionary education and service.

When "missionary" is substituted for "patriotic" in all of the different meanings above an entirely new list of methods, some highly educational, appears.

The Christian Flag.—It may be necessary to add a further word of explanation to Number 1: Christianity

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

has no acknowledged emblem, but the Christian Flag is well known and its symbolism is almost perfect. It is the banner of the Prince of peace. It stands for no creed or denomination. It contains no symbol of warfare. The ground is white, representing peace and purity. In the upper corner is a blue field, the color of the unclouded sky, the symbol of fidelity and truth. Its chief device, the cross of red, is the emblem of Christian sacrifice. The Christian patriot pledges fidelity to the kingdom of God when he salutes this flag.

With this flag the following salute may be used:

“I pledge allegiance to my flag, and to the Saviour for whose kingdom it stands, one brotherhood, uniting all mankind in service and love.”¹

¹ Written by Lynn Harold Hough, D. D., and first used by the author of these chapters in Dr. Hough's Sunday school on Christmas Eve, 1908.

VI

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES

TEN or fifteen minutes used occasionally before the main school, the departments or classes having rooms of their own, will give additional opportunities for missionary education. Such presentations are, of course, fragmentary and more or less superficial, and are most valuable for arousing interest in current missionary events or in giving publicity to some mission study and work already done in classes and departments.

In a graded school these so-called programs should always be given by departments. In an ungraded school they should be planned to interest the younger members, and if well done will also appeal to the older pupils. Home-made programs are to be preferred. The public presentation then becomes the expression of work already done and is more than an exhibition or show. The pupils themselves should be made responsible for planning and carrying out these programs, a rule which is equally applicable to the suggestions in Chapter V. The following have been tried and proved successful where adequate preparation has been made:

Book Reviews.—New missionary books from the Sunday school or public library should be given to pupils to read, with the understanding that a public review is to be given in the presence of other pupils. The Missionary Committee will help the reviewers to prepare this work.

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

The name of the book, the author and something about him, the theme and a short résumé of the story and a personal criticism or recommendation should be included in a good public book review.

Missionary Current Events.—These may involve a biographical sketch, a map talk, the explanation of pictures from magazines and papers, the use of a diagram or chart enlarged by the pupils and a debate between different classes. Current events, such as famine, fire, flood, plagues, etc., furnish opportunities for spontaneous giving and sometimes have serious missionary applications.

Mission-Study Class Reports.—A week-night mission-study class, a Sunday-school class organized for mission study, the study work of boys' and girls' clubs, mission bands and junior societies should all be reported to the pupils of a department or to the main school. This may be done by a résumé of the course or by telling a number of stories illustrating the different topics considered.

Reports of Missionary Service.—At least twice a year there should be a public report of the giving and personal missionary service of the school. There should be no boasting and no appearance of display. The motive of service in the face of need should prevail throughout. The character of these reports must be determined locally in view of the kinds and amount of service rendered.

Demonstrations of Missionary Life and Work.—If well done a simple use of dramatics will prove very effective.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

The missionary, in his contact with strange peoples, and the reaction of the heathen mind to the gospel message often yield really dramatic situations which may be most vividly presented to the school. They should always be preceded by careful study of all the parts and each act and sentence should be interpreted by those taking part. Such demonstrations may be easily prepared by members of study classes, especially by young people and intermediates. The classic stories of missions lend themselves to dramatic presentation.

A Missionary Musical.—Christian hymns translated into foreign tongues or native melodies, either secular or Christian, sung in solo and chorus parts, make a very inspiring program. As in the former suggestions, such a program is inspiring if well done; otherwise, it is farcical.

More Elaborate Programs.—For a full hour's program or one for an evening many suggestions may be found in playing the games of foreign children, simple dramatics, costume parties, lantern lectures (try one using boys and girls for lecturers, assigning four or five slides to eight or ten different pupils), demonstrations of native manners and customs and the telling of stories.

VII

HOME READING AND STUDY

THERE are two general ways by which a missionary reading campaign may be started in a Sunday school. One is a big, popular, enthusiastic movement, spurred by a contest or the giving of prizes. The other is a "still hunt." The latter will probably produce the most normal results and there is less likelihood of a reaction against missionary literature.

Only the most general suggestions can be given for a "still-hunt" reading campaign. One or two individuals keeping steadily at it may get results. Many of the missionary books of the author are read each year by business men and women, professional people, high-school students and younger boys and girls. In the back of every lending book is written, "Will each one who reads this book write his name below?" For library books, such a sentence may appear on a slip of paper pasted in the back.

It is probably best to select two or three persons who have the ability to know what other persons might be interested in the different books, and who have also the time and inclination to read all the books. The books may be found in public, Sunday-school or private libraries, or may be purchased by some special fund for that purpose. Suppose the intermediate superintendent decides that no boy or girl should be promoted from the Intermediate Department without having read at least three missionary

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

biographies and two books of general missionary reading. By displaying all five books, and by having reviews given before all the classes by five bright pupils, the books will be introduced. From Sunday to Sunday they should be checked up and reported. Add to this a good deal of enthusiasm, and the books will be read.

VIII

AN ADEQUATE GIVING POLICY

THIS is one of the most difficult and most debated problems in a local church and one not satisfactorily solved by very many churches. In view of this situation, the author feels free to set down here a possible giving policy for a local church and the relation of the Sunday school to it.

A General Budget.—There should be one general budget for a parish or church, which should include all the benevolent gifts and local current expenses of all the organizations in the parish. The amount of money needed for the expenses of the Sunday school should be included in this budget. The amount reasonably expected from the Sunday school for its own expenses and for its benevolences should be taken into account in these general items. In this budget there would not appear benevolent items from church, Sunday school, Young People's Society, adult Bible class, mission band, Junior Society, etc., but one parish item representing the total of all these and possibly more.

The Best Envelope.—The duplex envelope is the best collecting device for such a giving policy. It should be printed with the items of the budget for both current

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

expenses and benevolent gifts. Envelopes should be provided for every person in the parish, old and young.

The Canvass.—The simultaneous “every-member” canvass should then be instituted and an effort be made to reach the entire parish in a short time. Pledges on a weekly basis for the general items on the budget should be secured from all. The amounts of these pledges may be easily secured for each person and family by estimating the gifts to the different organizations and dividing the total.

Weekly Payments.—The weekly payments may be made to any organization by the children in Sunday school or at the church service, but preferably by all at the church service.

From Such a Policy These Results May Be Expected:

1. Would there not develop a consciousness of the unity, dignity and worth of the local church considered as a parish? The Sunday school would then have a real chance to teach such an idea and create such a consciousness.

2. In many churches the Sunday school, on account of long-standing private financing, is now considered by many in the Church as an outside institution. May we not expect it gradually to come to be looked upon as the teaching, or educational, branch of the whole Church?

3. Sunday-school pupils would develop in their maturing days a sense of responsibility for the Church and all it stands for. Loyalty to the Church is a bigger and better thing than loyalty to a Sunday school, however efficient and independent financially it may be.

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

4. The policy probably would not destroy, but rather help, the necessary support for the various Church boards and benevolent societies. The parish-abroad or station-plan idea of giving could be continued and very much strengthened by this whole-church budget scheme.

IX

MISSIONARY SUGGESTIONS BY GRADES

For Children Under Nine Years of Age.—This is supremely the story age. Little groups of children in mission bands, Sunday schools and homes may be entertained and instructed by the hour with simple stories. Child life is the key to the stories, and a big family of world children with one heavenly Father is the important theme. Care must be exercised not to provide stories with adult content told in a childish way. The stories should be illustrated by pictures and such objects as will describe child life and make it attractive.

In planning the activities for children under nine we must remember that the child's world is limited to the home, the neighborhood, the school and the church. The people with whom the child comes into contact are parents, neighborhood friends, relatives, playmates, teachers, the servants of the public good, such as policemen, letter carriers, firemen, health officers and that large circle of shopkeepers who provide our food and clothing. This is the child's world. Beyond this he knows little or cares little. Even if he learns of other people who live in other cities or other parts of the country, or other countries, they become real to him only as he takes them into his world. The child's interest in his world is in activity, and he is controlled almost entirely by his instinctive feelings.

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

The child under nine can be taught to show gratitude for benefits received, to help mother and others in the various home duties; to show kindness to animals by feeding the birds, the households pets and the domestic animals of the field; to provide flowers for the sick in the home and the community; to give flowers to others who may not be sick, in order to add to their joy and appreciation of life, and to help the poor by providing clothing, food, pictures and flowers. The older children may care for the younger ones in the home, the school and the Sunday school.

Especially in the latter part of the period the teacher may gradually extend the child's interest so as to include God's great family of children throughout the world. Either through personal observation of foreign children in the community, or through stories, pictures, objects, nursery rhymes, folklore, games, etc., the other children of the world may be brought into his life.

For Boys and Girls Nine to Twelve Years of Age.—The interest in stories continues, but the stories are of a different character. Adult experiences and heroic acts of the physical sort interest boys and girls of this age, and the tales must be true and must concern big and wonderful deeds in order to excite the hero-worshiping junior. It is the memory period, when the great names, places, events, etc., may be eagerly learned as foundation knowledge for future study and activity.

The organization of the junior classes or department into a week-day mission band, study classes and societies is now possible and should be emphasized. The following missionary activities have been reported as being successful: impersonations in exercises and plays, the salute

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

of the Christian flag, illustration of a missionary hymn in a notebook, map-tracing, the collection of foreign postage stamps, post cards and coins.

Two or three things come into the life of junior boys and girls which increase the range of missionary activity and service. The study of geography and history based on the new senses of space and time gives a real interest to the hitherto undiscovered worlds of the past and of the far away. Boys and girls also have a new interest in constructing and collecting material things which makes it possible to offer them a much wider range of activity. In addition, therefore, to the suggestions for children under nine, most of which are applicable to these boys and girls, the juniors may collect picture cards and pictures; make scrapbooks and picture books for hospitals, orphanages and foreign mission stations; collect magazines and papers for homes for the aged and poor, for soldiers and sailors and for Salvation Army quarters; and construct articles for gifts, especially at Christmas and Easter time.

The junior age is the time to emphasize the systematic giving of money, which will have value just in so far as the child realizes that the money is his own. On account of the new interest in the things that he possesses times of self-denial are very apropos. Sympathy arising out of great disasters, such as storm and famine, frequently offers such opportunities.

For Boys and Girls Thirteen to Sixteen Years of Age.— In adolescence, new life, physical, mental and spiritual, comes to the individual. Self-consciousness becomes clear and definite, self-feeling is marked and personality takes shape. Just as it is the crucial period for the adop-

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

tion of personal religion, so is it the time for the stamping of character with the missionary spirit and ideals. Missionary education is now different from that of former years. Direct training of the missionary motive, the will to do and to believe and the desire for personal service, must be considered.

The intermediate is the gang age. Clubs and societies of all sorts are eagerly formed by the boys and girls. The study class and mission band or circle at this period attain their highest efficiency among children. They desire an active part in the organization and conduct of their meetings.

For material, it will be found that the short story or incident of the previous period will now give place to an extended and detailed account. Biography yields the best material for character study. Boys and girls of the early adolescent period nearly always have some personal ideal among their adult friends, teachers or parents. This tendency to hero worship is the missionary teacher's opportunity. A textbook and helps for the teacher may be used. Each pupil should be provided with a book and regular meetings should be scheduled. For missionary activities the following have been reported as successful and are recommended: organized clubs mentioned above, debates, lantern talks by the boys and girls themselves, map-drawing, essays on various topics, illustrated notebooks, missionary stories and personal contact with missionaries.

In planning the activities for early adolescent boys and girls there is one new principle which should be realized by all teachers and parents. Activity and personal service will have value just in so far as they are a real ex-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

pression of the child's own inner desire and purpose. The teacher may suggest, make the appeal or modify the pupils' environment, but the pupils themselves should make the decision. Boys and girls may actually observe cases of need, discuss what may be done and decide on the manner of performing the service. They should be permitted to decide the distribution of their offerings of money for Christian work. As far as possible they should have some responsibility in the local church, such as the care of the younger children, volunteer choir service or acting as assistants to teachers and officers. They may plan for a missionary box or barrel, providing the articles and attending to the shipment. In their organizations they may assume places of responsibility and help to provide activities for those who are younger than themselves. The acts of service outlined for the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls could be appropriately attached to the religious instruction in the home and the Sunday school.

For Young People.—Of all the periods of development mentioned, this age offers the most unique opportunity to the missionary teacher. It is the time of life just before the assumption of the tasks of manhood and womanhood, when life work is usually decided. It is the most unselfish period of life, a fact well noted in the beginnings of love-making between the sexes. The romantic in literature has a keen interest. New social duties exclude other things, and there seems to be a falling away of interest in religious matters. Study circles are almost impossible and organizations suffer. Much personal work must be done to start study classes. If the curriculum or course offered is worth while from the young people's standpoint, and if

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

the leader is acceptable, there will be sufficient reward for holding a class.

For study classes such topics as life-work questions, the present-day problems of the kingdom, sketches of the more romantic lives of missionaries and social problems of the community are suggested, and have been found most satisfactory.

The missionary activities may take the form of missionary socials, musicals, dramatizations, tableaux, debates, reading circles, original essays, personal investigations and the study class.

The social and altruistic feelings are now naturally active. The permanency of these fundamental impulses will depend upon their use in this period. The opportunities for service will be limited only by the time and the ability of the young people to carry them out. There are one or two points of difference, however, between the kind of things which young men and women should be given to do and those provided for boys and girls. Young people may be asked to assume definite responsibility for work. The activities heretofore suggested should be continued, with the change of emphasis on minuteness of organization and the personal responsibility of the pupils. Young people may teach Sunday-school classes, lead mission-study classes, assist in settlements, boys' and girls' groups and playground work. They may also be organized to meet special needs in the charitable, philanthropic and benevolent work of the community and church. They will rally particularly to the suggestion of the support of some special object in the mission field, such as a teacher in a school, or the endowment of a room in a hospital, or the care of some children in an orphanage.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

We should also seek to interest the young people in the problems and principles which underlie the needs of the world. Their tendency to philosophize about everything shows that their minds are dwelling on bigger matters than the mere alleviation of a single case of poverty or sickness. In the same manner they may be interested in the spiritual needs of the people of the world, and new motives may be aroused for adequately supporting the missionary enterprise.

For the Adult Classes.—Though life is not yet mature, the period above twenty-one years of age is generally spoken of as adult. The age of twenty-five or twenty-six usually sees the close of adolescence, the last period being characterized by the final stages in the maturing of the body and mind. The differences between the characteristics of the few years before twenty-five and the years after are of degree rather than kind. The very fact that by this time nature has completed the structure of the human body indicates that for the first time in life it is ready to bear the burden of the actual work of life. Practically all of the functions are mature.

In the realm of the intellect reason is dominant. At first the child learns largely by imitation and emulation. Then in early adolescence he creates for himself a personal ideal. Later he projects his own ideal or an idealized self so characteristic of young people of sixteen to twenty. Still later, his guides to conduct are the principles which he forms when ideals are realized in activity. The interest in family life, politics, relation of capital and labor, community welfare, the Church and her work seems to indicate that social feeling has reached a higher stage.

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

Add to the above that characteristic element of American life, the tendency to organization, and it will at once be seen that if a man's early training is good his natural interests, characteristics and God-given place in the world as a member of society all point to the part which he is to take in the actual constructive work laid down in the program of the Christian Church.

Our church life ought to be so planned as to utilize for the purpose of useful work in building up the kingdom of God every one of its adult members. Missions are the Christian Church at work in the world. Missions may for convenience be divided into local, state, home and foreign, which may be necessary geographical distinctions. The missionary enterprise furnishes, however, the field in which each mature Christian should find his particular place and work.

X

HELPS FOR THE MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

FOR all of the methods suggested in these chapters there has been provided abundant help. There are books of methods, annotated lists of reading and study books, pictures with stories, charts, maps, periodicals, prayer circles, lantern lectures for purchase or rent and, above all, the most wonderful opportunities for service and for gifts of money. Let the Missionary Committee acquaint itself with the literature available. Letters of inquiry to the Denominational Sunday-school and Publishing Agency and the Denominational Home or Foreign Mission Board will bring the needed information.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

XI

BRINGING THE PUPIL TO A DECISION
FOR CHRIST

BY

REV. GEORGE GORDON MAHY

BRINGING THE PUPIL TO A DECISION FOR CHRIST

I

THE NEED

Sunday-School Organization and Development.—Every Christian institution and movement which we know anything about has had its origin in a great missionary and evangelistic impulse, born of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. Such an impulse led to the founding of the Sunday school. It was created as an agency for bringing lost souls to Christ; and its leaders and teachers gathered into it, as their pupils, the untaught and neglected children of the streets.

The passing years have brought about an amazing development of Sunday-school organization, of Sunday-school attendance and of Sunday-school literature and methods of work. World, national and state conventions are attended by thousands of religious leaders. The results of modern scientific research in Biblical interpretation, in child nature and in pedagogy have been placed at the disposal of Sunday-school workers.

A Double Loss.—In spite of these great gains, however, evidences of loss are apparent, for, while the Sunday school as grown, it has done so by building itself around the 'ldren of the Church, and has not maintained sufficient

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

missionary zeal to extend its work among the very children whom it was designed to reach. As a result, our modern Sunday-school pupils (except in the case of a comparatively small number of mission schools) are no longer drawn from the untaught and neglected, but from the sheltered and protected children of comfortable homes. They are well dressed, well nourished and happy hearted. Naturally, they do not arouse in their teachers the same instinct of rescue, nor does their case appear to be so urgent as that of the pupils of the so-called "ragged schools" of the early days or the mission schools of to-day. It follows with equal naturalness that there has been a decline of the evangelistic spirit in Sunday-school work which too often has led to a kind of quiet and comfortable, not to say careless, teaching of the Bible lesson, in which there is no yearning for lost souls and no tender personal appeal to the pupils to seek Christ's forgiveness for sin, to accept him as Saviour and to confess him before the world. This sort of teaching magnifies the work of imparting religious truth to the mind, and fails to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit and the necessity for co-operating with him in applying the teaching of the lesson to the heart and the conscience of the pupil.

This double loss—of missionary spirit and of a true evangelistic zeal—is responsible for two things which are revealed in the annual reports of our present-day Sunday-school work. The first thing is that in many of our great denominations Sunday-school attendance apparently reached the high-water mark some years since, and is now declining. Nothing short of a revival of the missionary spirit which led Robert Raikes and D. L. Moody, with a host of others, to seek out the lost and forlorn

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

children of the crowded alleys, will serve to check the present alarming decline in attendance. The second thing is that, as an evangelistic agency, the Sunday school is not measuring up to its responsibility, for the reports show that out of every five Sunday-school pupils, only two are led to Christ and into the membership of the Christian Church, while three pass beyond the circle of church life, out into the world of indifference and sin. The beauty of any piece of work lies in the perfection of its finish. There is a suggestion of waste and a certain pathos about an unfinished painting, an unfinished book, an unfinished house, for behind these lies the story of diverted or of failing energies. Especially is this true of an unfinished work in the Sunday school, for surely the saddest thing on earth is an unperfected character, a broken life, a lost soul. It is this which gives such a sad significance to the great procession of boys and girls, on the verge of young manhood and young womanhood, who are annually reported as having turned their backs upon the teaching of the Sunday school, the ordinances of the Church, and the Saviour who died for the redemption of their souls. The only thing which will turn back to Christ this procession of the children of the Church is the revival of a genuine spirit of evangelism in the Sunday school.

Pupils Must Be Brought Face to Face with Christ.

—If a true spirit of evangelism exists in the Sunday school the methods by which the pupils are brought to a decision for Christ will take care of themselves. For this reason, while certain methods are indicated in these chapters, they are not insisted upon. The chief

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

thing is to bring every pupil face to face with the living Christ, through his direct and personal invitations, promises, warnings and commands with respect to discipleship and service. There are some Sunday schools in which such work is never done, because the teachers and officers have somehow allowed a certain formality and an atmosphere of chilliness to creep into their work. Deep down in their hearts they long to see their pupils brought to Christ, but they do not know how to change existing conditions nor how to create a new atmosphere in which such a result can be accomplished.

A Fire Kindled and Communicated.—It is often true that some one in the Sunday school becomes deeply concerned about its low spiritual tone, and anxious to awaken in the hearts of the teachers and pupils a new spirit of earnestness. A prayer which was printed and scattered broadcast, both in this country and in Europe, some years ago, read: "O Lord send a revival, and let it begin in me!" God often accomplishes his purpose by kindling a fire in a solitary heart. It may be that of the pastor or of the superintendent or of a teacher. Let anyone so aroused call the teachers and officers together for conference and prayer. Let him communicate to them his own deep feeling of anxiety over the spiritual condition of the school, and urge them to discover exactly how many of the pupils are members of the Church, and who among them seem to be making progress in the Christian life; what are the things which are hindering the growth of others; and also how many of the pupils have as yet made no public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Then let him lead the teachers to ask: "What is our own

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

spiritual state and what is our life influence upon our pupils?" "How often and how earnestly have we engaged in intercessory prayer for the conversion of our pupils?" "How deep is our own personal interest in our study of the Bible and the preparation of the lessons?" "Are we conscious that our own souls are being fed by the Spirit of God as he opens to us the Scriptures?" "Do we come to the classroom with our hearts all aglow with fresh revelations of the beauty and the glory of God, and the wonder of his plan of salvation?" Such a conference as this would create in many a school a new spiritual atmosphere, and transform it from a barren to a fruitful field.

In One School.—When the writer visited a certain church and asked questions concerning the condition of the Sunday school, he was informed that the atmosphere of the school was unfavorable to evangelistic work, inasmuch as a number of the teachers were opposed to any appeals being made to the pupils to confess Christ as their Saviour. He asked permission to have a conference with the teachers and officers of that school directly after the Sunday morning service. The time for the conference was necessarily very short. Calling upon the nearest teacher he asked: "How many pupils have you in your class, and how old are they?" He was told that there were twelve pupils and that their ages ranged from fourteen to sixteen years. The next question was: "How many of these pupils have publicly professed Christ?" The answer was: "Only two of them." Every teacher present was called upon to give the same information, and when all had reported it was found that over sixty pupils in that school, above the age of fourteen, had not

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

made public profession of their faith in Christ, and that many of them had never been asked to make such a profession.

At the beginning of the conference the teachers seemed to be disturbed at the personal nature of the questions which were asked, and at the insistent placing of responsibility upon them for the souls of their pupils. They were particularly disturbed when they were asked to read, and apply to themselves, verses seven and eight of the thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel: "So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, and thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way; that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand." But as the conference progressed there were evidences of marked concern on the faces of many of the teachers, and as they separated to go to their classrooms they did so with a new seriousness of purpose. The lesson of that day lent itself to the presentation of the gospel appeal, and the teachers applied the lesson so earnestly and effectively that at the close of the school, when they were gathered together for a report of the hour's work, they were filled with joy because forty or more of their pupils had yielded themselves to Jesus Christ, and made a clear confession of their faith in him in the presence of their classmates.

Here was a school in which there appeared to be an unspiritual atmosphere, and which for a number of years had failed to perfect its work by bringing its pupils to a decision for Christ. The teachers and officers seemed

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

to be separated from each other by a sort of spiritual reserve. It was only necessary to crack the ice of this reserve by awakening them to a sense of their responsibility and bringing them to a point where they were ready to make a definite effort to win their pupils for Jesus Christ. This conference changed the whole atmosphere of the school. It created a new bond of fellowship between the teachers and officers, and brought into the sessions of the Sunday school a spirit of earnestness, reverence, watchfulness, sympathy and love which has met with instant response on the part of the pupils.

II

PLACING THE RESPONSIBILITY

IF we should sum up the efforts made by the Sunday schools to bring their pupils to a decision for Christ, they would fall into three groups: (1) Those which place the responsibility upon the teacher; (2) those which place the responsibility upon the pastor; (3) those which place the responsibility upon the superintendent.

Placing the Responsibility Upon the Teacher.—The schools which place the responsibility upon the teacher emphasize the idea of individual work, and consider that their responsibility is discharged when the teacher, whose work perhaps is supplemented by the pastor, has personally invited them to enter the Christian life. If all our Sunday-school teachers had the true evangelistic spirit, and were prepared for the work of soul-winning, there would be no necessity for further anxiety on the part of the Church concerning the spiritual welfare of her children, and no need for further evangelistic effort on the part of the school. But it is necessary that we should consider just what preparation of mind and heart is needed in order that the teacher may really have a “true evangelistic spirit and be prepared for the work of soul-winning.”

(1) The teacher must be familiar with, and have a firm faith in, the great doctrinal statements of the Bible concerning sin and God's plan of salvation from sin. (2)

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

This knowledge and belief will convince the teacher that every pupil who has not repented of sin, accepted Christ as Saviour and confessed him as such before the world, is, according to the gospel, "dead through your trespasses and sins," no matter how attractive or winsome a personality that pupil may have. The apostle Paul wrote, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died." This conviction of the spiritual need of the pupil, combined with the consciousness of possessing the life message, "One died for all," will overcome all timidity on the part of the teacher in dealing with the vital question of a soul's relation to Christ, and will unfailingly lead him to the underlying gospel message which every Sunday-school lesson contains. (3) It will also develop in the teacher great patience, so that if his first efforts are unsuccessful there will be no discouragement upon his part, but rather a deepened determination so to live and labor and pray for his pupils that, in the end, they must by the very compulsion of love be compelled to yield themselves to Christ.

There is a beautiful story told by Henry Drummond of two students in the University of Edinburgh. One of them was an earnest Christian. The other was an unbeliever. Through the years of their fellowship the Christian student had prayed with great earnestness for the conversion of his comrade, and pleaded with him to yield his heart to Jesus Christ. The time came for the graduation of the Christian student, and still his unbelieving roommate had not surrendered to Jesus Christ. A splendid professional opening offered itself to the Christian student, and he was urged to take advantage of it immediately after his graduation, but at the opening of

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

the next school year, to the surprise of the unbelieving student, his old roommate was back again, preparing to take a post-graduate course at the university. It was not until some weeks later that he learned of the rejection of the splendid professional opening by his Christian roommate, who had sacrificed his opportunity in order that he might, if necessary, give another year to the work of winning his unsaved comrade to Jesus Christ. It is scarcely necessary to say that this unselfish devotion broke the stubborn will of the unbeliever and brought him in penitence and love to Jesus Christ.

When the pupils of our Sunday schools discover similar evidences of loving sacrifice and Christlike solicitude in the lives of their teachers a long step will have been taken toward the solution of the problem which now presses upon the Church: How shall we bring a greater number of our children to a decision for Christ and hold them for his service?

Placing the Responsibility Upon the Pastor.—The school which regards the pastor as the person best fitted to bring the pupils to a decision for Christ attaches great importance to the pastor's instruction class, and calls upon the teachers to select and send into the pastor's class those pupils who have not made a public profession of their faith, in order that he may instruct them concerning the Christian life and its obligations, and prepare them intelligently to undertake the responsibilities of church membership.

A prominent minister tells of a fellow minister who often passes from class to class during the session of the school and inquires of the teachers how many of their

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

pupils have publicly professed Christ. His questions help to fix in the minds of the teachers the fact that they have one or three or more (as the case may be) who are potentially, but not actually, members of the visible body of Christ. This same pastor, four times a year, announces that he will teach an inquirer's class in the study in the church during the Sunday-school hour, and the teachers are requested to send to him at that time any of their pupils who are willing to join such a class. He reports that annually there are large accessions to his church from the Sunday school through this class.

It is almost unbelievable, and yet it is true, that there are still many ministers who do not regard the Sunday school as a field for personal effort on their part. They are glad to have the Sunday school, but are content to leave its work solely in the hands of the lay workers of the church. It is not too strong a statement to say that no pastor can hope for permanent success in any spiritual sense who neglects the work of the Sunday school. And this is true of the pastors of great metropolitan churches as well as of the pastors of smaller churches.

One Pastor's Method.—The pastor of one of the largest churches in the United States said recently: "I have three congregations every Sunday—one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. If I were compelled to choose any one of these audiences I would not hesitate for a moment to take the afternoon audience, though I know that this audience is composed almost wholly of young people and children, and that I should be limited to fifteen minutes in what I have to say to them; for it is out of this audience that I expect to

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

secure the materials for building a church which shall serve the living God long after I am gone." This pastor declares that he has not missed a session of the Sunday school for many years, except on account of necessary absence from the city, and that he regards the few minutes which are given to him every Sunday afternoon, for a direct heart talk with the pupils, as one of the brightest periods of the week, and that he makes just as careful preparation for his message to the Sunday school as for his Sunday morning or evening sermon.

It is not difficult for the teachers of this school to persuade their pupils to enter the pastor's instruction class, for the pupils know him and love him. Indeed, it is his proud boast that he can instantly call by name every one of the boys and girls in that school who is above the primary grade. Year after year a splendid harvest of boys and girls is brought to Jesus Christ and gathered into the membership of the church. There are many churches in the part of the city where this church is located which are losing their strength, but it continues to grow in strength and influence, and is a very fountain of blessing not only to the particular section in which it is located, but also to the whole city. Fortunate is the school whose teachers and officers have the help of such a pastor in their effort to bring their pupils to a decision for Christ.

Placing the Responsibility Upon the Superintendent.
—There are still other Sunday schools which follow the third method, and make the superintendent the real leader in all the evangelistic work of the school. The pastor of a church which is thoroughly evangelistic in

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

its method, and which reports the largest accessions on confession of faith for the past five years of any church in the denomination, says: "Our superintendent is a thoroughly trained Bible teacher and a splendid executive. Practically all the evangelistic spirit in our Sunday school is imparted to the teachers through him. For several years he has brought the teachers together on Wednesday evenings, before the prayer meeting, for a teacher's tea, and I believe it to be true that there is no pupil in our school over twelve years of age, who is known to be unsaved, who is not a special object of anxious care to every teacher in the school. He has so trained the teachers and inspired them with his spirit that under his leadership the invitation to come to Christ is continually pressed upon the unsaved pupils."

III

THE DECISION DAY SERVICE

THE most effective evangelistic Sunday schools are those which have wisely combined the three methods considered in the previous chapter. By this means they have secured the complete coöperation of pastor, superintendent and teachers in a steady and effective evangelistic work throughout the year, but, in addition to this, they set apart a day known as "Decision Day" for a special evangelistic work, and by this means they gather up the results of the work of the year. This method of Sunday-school evangelism recognizes clearly that the act of bringing a soul to decision for Christ is not an isolated act. The Decision Day Service is looked forward to with profound interest, and is really regarded as the culmination of many days of prayer and careful preparation.

Regular Work of the School a Preparation.—Preparation for a Decision Day Service, therefore, includes: (1) All the regular work of the school; (2) the special measures which are taken, just prior to the service, to secure its success.

The value of the persistent and regular teaching work of the school, as a preparation for the special evangelistic appeal, is illustrated in an article written some years ago by William T. Stead in reviewing the characteristics of the Welsh revival. He pictured a hulk

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

submerged in the harbor. For days a powerful pump has been at work, forcing air into it. Slowly the hulk rises, until at last it reaches the surface, but it is still overturned and will soon settle again to the bottom of the harbor if it does not continue to have the artificial support of the pressure pump. It is in a state of equilibrium, and at this instant all that is needed is a single touch to enable it to right itself and float again upon the surface of the water. Thus the regular teaching of the Sunday-school lesson, the constant application of the invitations and warnings of the gospel message to the heart and conscience of the pupils, effectively prepare the way for the Decision Day. On that day the touch is given to prepared souls, and they are led out of the lingering shadows of uncertainty and over the crumbling wall of separation from Christ into the full light of a happy Christian experience.

In this translation and transformation there is the picture of

“A pleasant meadow, and a Shepherd’s call
Beyond the confines of a crumbling wall.
I and a flock of lambs together stay
Upon this side, and wait the coming day ;
And when that kindly voice is heard afar
The lambs in gladness leap the wall’s slight bar
And run to meet the Shepherd.”

Special Preparation.—But the results of the Decision Day Service will be more certain and satisfactory if, in addition to the ordinary work of the school, special preparation shall also be made. This special preparation should include at least these features:

- (1) The day should be selected and announced in ad-

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

vance, and attention should frequently be called to its importance from the pulpit and the Sunday-school platform. (2) Parents should be interviewed by personal visitation in order that their wishes may be ascertained, and, sometimes, that their ignorant and unworthy prejudices may be removed. Many a child has sat through a Decision Service eager with longing, anxious to give Jesus his heart, but forbidden by blind and ignorant parents to make any public confession of faith in him. There are a good many people to-day who are as much out of sympathy with Christ as were his disciples of old when they rebuked those who would bring the children to him. These people should be asked to give careful attention to the record of the Gospel: "But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God." (3) The Christian pupils should be urged to greater watchfulness in their life and conversation, that they may not prove a stumbling-block to others, and they should be encouraged to meet in groups to consider the question of their responsibility, and to pray both for a renewal of their own spiritual life and for the conversion of their associates. (4) The pastor, teachers and officers should arrange for a personal interview with the unconverted pupils, and at this interview clearly present the reasons why each one, when he has come to years of discretion, should make a full and complete surrender to Christ and a public profession of faith in him.

Conducting the Decision Service.—In the conduct of the Decision Service itself it will usually be wise to set

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

aside the regular lesson for the day, and to place in the hands of the teachers and every pupil in the school this or some other covenant card, on which, in addition to the covenant, there are printed a few clear gospel invitations and promises:

MY COVENANT WITH GOD

GOD'S COMMAND: Repent ye, and believe in the gospel.—Mark 1:15.

THE GOSPEL: Christ died for our sins and rose again.—1 Cor. 15:1-4.

GOD'S PROMISE: As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God.—John 1:12.

Believing the gospel, I turn from every known sin to Christ and look to him for forgiveness and life. I do now receive and confess Christ as my Saviour, John 1:12; Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9, 10; and, trusting that he will keep me, I commit the direction of my whole life to him, Heb. 7:25; Jude 24.

Signed.....

Date..... Place.....

Take this part of the card home with you. Pray over it, study and believe the Scriptures it contains.

MY COVENANT WITH GOD

I have this day accepted and confessed Christ as my Saviour, and committed the direction of my whole life to him. As he gives me strength I will strive from day to day to be a true and faithful Christian.

Signed.....

Date..... Place.....

Give this part of the card to the superintendent, pastor or your Sunday-school teacher.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

This card is given to the pupils in order that they may have before them something definite to consider and act upon.

The Call to the Christian Pupils.—Those who have already professed their faith in Christ should be asked to think carefully of their failures and sins since first they confessed Christ, and urged to take a forward step by prayerfully renewing their allegiance to him in a solemn promise that from this decision hour they will earnestly strive for victory over those things in their lives which have heretofore injured them and hindered their Christian growth. They should be asked to use the reverse side of the covenant card (which has been distributed through the school), and on that reverse side, under the simple heading, "My Forward Step," put in their own words a promise to Jesus Christ of what they intend to be and to do thereafter to please and glorify him.

Explaining Repentance.—When the teachers have in this way pointed out to the Christian pupils the necessity for a more earnest and faithful discipleship, and the joy of living close to Christ, they should take the covenant card and have the whole class, with open Bibles, carefully read the gospel invitations and promises printed upon it. The conversation over the passages indicated on the card will very likely take some such form as this: After the pupils have read Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel," the teacher should ask, "Would you call the last part of this verse a command?" The answer will be, "Yes." "Who gave the command?" The answer will be, "Jesus

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

gave it." "Did he have a right to give such a commandment?" "Yes." "Why has he the right to give such a commandment?" "Because he is the Son of God and all power is given unto him both in heaven and on earth." The teacher should call attention to the fact that this is the very first command which Jesus ever gave, and that with this commandment he began all his preaching and teaching, and that, therefore, he must have considered it one of the most important things he would ever have to say. Now the teacher should call attention to the commandment itself, "Repent ye, and believe in the gospel," and should not fail to explain that repentance means two things: (1) That we should be sorry for our sins; (2) that we should turn away from our sins.

A familiar Old Testament passage may be quoted as an illustration of repentance and a promise of the blessing which comes to the repentant heart: "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy." Prov. 28:13.

What Is the Gospel?—It will be noted that the second part of the commandment on the card is, "believe in the gospel." The question will naturally arise in the minds of the pupils, What is the gospel? The teacher should be able to answer by having the class turn to 1 Cor. 15:1-4, where Paul says, "The gospel which I preached unto you, . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day." (R. V.) The teacher should explain that what we are to believe is this: that Christ died for our sins and therefore is able to forgive our sins, and to put them away just as soon as we confess them and turn

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

away from them. It should also be shown that Christ has not only died for our sins, but that he has risen from the dead and therefore is living to-day, and waiting to see whether we are going to receive and acknowledge him as our Lord and Saviour.

At this point the teacher should have the class read John 1: 11, 12, "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." At once the class will see that there are two classes of people referred to: those who do not receive Christ and those who do receive him.

Questions should be asked about the meaning of "receiving Christ," and the teacher should aid in formulating answers to the questions. These answers should make it clear that "receiving Christ" means to submit the will to him for his guidance and control; to give him our love and gratitude for the great love which led him to die for our sins; to place our time and all our strength at his disposal, and to turn to him in prayer for counsel and help in every time of need, and in every possible way to seek to please him. It should be made clear that the way to please him is to do at once everything that he tells us to do.

Christ's Requirements of Us.—At this point the class should be asked to turn to Matt. 10: 32, and read about one of the very first things which Jesus asks the Christian to do for him: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven." For further light on what is meant by "con-

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

fessing him" the class should read also Rom. 10: 9, 10, "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Then let the class turn again to John 1: 12 and read the specific promise, "to them gave he the right to become children of God." Up to this point the class has been considering what God has asked them to do in obedience to the gospel.

Now they should be asked to consider what God has definitely promised to do for them when they obey the commandment and sincerely repent and believe the gospel. God pledges himself that he will give everyone who receives Jesus the right to become a child of God. It should be explained that this means power to overcome sinful habits which up to the present moment have been too strong for us, and power to grow every day stronger and stronger in our fight against sin. These promises should be reënforced by having the class read Heb. 7: 25, "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The class will see from this promise that Jesus is "able to save" because he is now living, and that he is engaged at the present moment in the work of making intercession for everyone who comes near to God through him, and, accordingly, the thing for everyone to do who desires to have the power to become the child of God is at once to draw near to God.

Taking the Covenant.—Now the class should be asked to consider very carefully the covenant itself:

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AT WORK

“Believing the gospel, I turn from every known sin to Christ and look to him for forgiveness and life. I do now receive and confess Christ as my Saviour, and, trusting that he will keep me, I commit the direction of my whole life to him.”

The class should be asked to read this covenant in concert, and then thoughtfully to read it over to themselves; after which the teacher should call upon each pupil who has not previously made a profession of faith in Christ to say in the presence of the class whether or not he will now take this covenant as his, sign it, seal it with a prayer and in this way definitely enter upon the Christian life.

A Renewed Consecration and a New Confession.—The superintendent, the pastor or some one who has been chosen as a special leader for the Decision Service should then take the school, and in a brief and simple address, not exceeding fifteen minutes in length (ten minutes is still better), should review the gospel invitations on the covenant card. He should be careful not to introduce extraneous matter that he may avoid confusing the pupils. A simple and natural illustration may often be used effectively to fasten the truth on the mind, and then the covenant should be read in concert. The teachers and the Christian pupils who have promised God that they will take a “forward step” should be asked to declare it by rising. The pupils who have taken the covenant of surrender to Christ should be asked to stand, and while they stand to read the covenant in concert, before the whole school, as a further fulfillment of Christ’s requirement in Matt. 10 : 32, “Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven.”

A DECISION FOR CHRIST

The teachers should then collect the lower part of each card after it has been signed, and the pupils should be asked to take the upper part home with them for further meditation and study.

No time should be lost after the pupils have been led to a decision for Christ. They should at once be enlisted in some form of Christian testimony and service; in junior or senior Young People's Society; in missionary groups; in personal work bands and prayer groups, or in communicant classes.

Then, as soon as possible, they should be received into full membership in the Church.

2-

8638

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



48 438 268

448898

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



48 438 268